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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide presents materials for teaching about Central America and emphasizes the concepts of environment, culture, interdependence, and citizenship. The guide is designed to integrate the study of geographic, economic, historic, political, and social features of Central American nations. The major theme of the document deals with how Central American people have been affected by their environment as they have attempted to fulfill their basic needs. Subtheme A concerns the environment and culture. There are seven learning strategies to aid teachers in developing this theme. They include the use of maps, photographs, charts, and worksheets. Subtheme B deals with Central America's past and present. Nine teaching strategies are presented including investigations about U.S. policy in Central America, the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, and background about the Panama Canal. Subtheme C is a study of economic inequality among the peoples of Central America. There are five teaching strategies comparing the rich and poor of Central America, showing income distribution, and discussing U.S. aid to Central America. Subtheme D is a study of the diverse cultures of the region. Strategies are presented to study the music, arts, crafts, food, recreation, family life, and different religions of Central America. The curriculum guide also includes: (1) instructions on how to use the guide; (2) themes and time allotments for social studies; (3) guidelines on how to develop participation projects; (4) a content outline; (5) suggestions for integrating social studies with science; (6) vocabulary terms matched with subthemes and strategies; and (7) teacher strategies and student worksheets. (SM)

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Social Studies Grade 5—The Western Hemisphere

THEME IV

CENTRAL AMERICA

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Teacher Strategies and Student Worksheets

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Foreword

Social Studies Grade 5 has been developed in response to the New York State Regents Action Plan in social studies, K-6. Throughout the period during which this bulletin was developed, pilot-tested and revised, participants in the curriculum process were concerned with the following:

- providing a background of concepts such as cultural diffusion and interdependence to help students gain a global perspective;
- infusing information processing and problem solving skills;
- building attitudes of personal and social responsibility to prepare students for participatory citizenship.

We have addressed these issues, as New York State does in its K-6 Social Studies syllabus, using an integrated approach. The geography, history, and the political, economic, and social systems of the Western Hemisphere form the content. There are ten major concepts to be emphasized including citizenship, change, scarcity, technology. The infused process skills are reading comprehension, writing, higher level thinking, and personal and social skills. In thus linking content, skills, and concepts* in this curriculum, we enable students not only to cope with their present but also to meet the challenges of their future.

Charlotte Frank

Charlotte Frank
Executive Director
Division of Curriculum and Instruction

* For a complete presentation of the skills, concepts, and content to be integrated, see the chart on page 5.

Acknowledgments

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How to Use This Bulletin

Introduction

The new Social Studies Grade 5 curriculum bulletin, which has been developed with input from teachers and supervisors across the system, updates and supersedes earlier curricula. This curriculum conforms to the New York State Regents Action Plan in social studies, K-6. It integrates the study of geographic, economic, historic, political and social features of nations in the Western Hemisphere with the development of key concepts and skills. (See the diagram in this section, which illustrates New York State's integrated approach to the K-6 social studies syllabus.)

While this curriculum focuses on the geographic and economic features of countries in the Western Hemisphere, it gives equal weight to the history and culture of each region studied. The new curriculum is designed to help students understand that environment influences but does not determine a people's culture. Human beings make choices about what to do with their environment; these choices are influenced as much by history as by geography.

This new Social Studies Grade 5 curriculum also emphasizes the interdependencies that have linked and continue to link people in the Western Hemisphere. Through the process of cultural diffusion, ideas, values, and products have been exchanged among societies, and changes have resulted from these cross-cultural contacts. An appreciation of the connectedness as well as the diversity of the various nations in the Western Hemisphere will promote an understanding in students of the networks linking nations today.

Teachers should note that the development of major concepts highlighted in this Social Studies Grade 5 curriculum, e.g., environment, culture, interdependence, and citizenship, begins in earlier elementary grades. Further elaboration of these same concepts continues in each successive elementary grade, spiraling up to the secondary school grades, where their treatment is more complex and sophisticated.

Suggestions for Using This Bulletin

This curriculum bulletin is designed to assist teachers and supervisors in the implementation of the Social Studies Grade 5 curriculum. The materials presented in this guide represent approaches for teaching Theme IV.

While Theme I, which relates to one broad topic, has not been subdivided, Theme II and succeeding themes have been divided into several subthemes with rationales. These subthemes are themselves subdivided into strategies that incorporate concepts, understandings, content and skills objectives, springboard to the activity, development, and summary/application. Many strategies also include a word warm-up and suggested follow-up activities.

Strategies are suggested teaching techniques which illustrate how a particular topic might be taught. They are provided to assist teachers in planning lessons. The content and skills objectives in each strategy present specific knowledge and skills that students should achieve at the completion of that strategy. The concepts and understandings to be developed as a result of that strategy are also listed.

Strategies include a variety of techniques geared to enable the teacher to achieve the content and skills objectives of that particular learning activity. Each strategy provided in this curriculum bulletin aims to promote learning by including one or more skills in an area such as critical thinking, reading, writing, map interpretation, and problem solving. These strategies call for a variety of activities, including roleplaying, simulations, small-group discussions, brainstorming, debates, research activities, interviews, and "hands on" experience.

Springboards provide activities to motivate students' curiosity and involve them in the strategy. The word warm-ups include models for teaching new social studies vocabulary. New terms are taught when they first appear in this Social Studies Grade 5 curriculum. Should you wish to refer to the model activities for a particular term, each theme includes a list of vocabulary which appears in that volume.

Worksheets, which immediately follow the corresponding strategy, contain teaching/learning activities including such primary sources as photographs, diaries, documents, maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, speeches, and letters of a particular era. These high-interest materials can become a viable basis for developing critical thinking skills while assisting students in mastering the relevant factual information.

Teachers should be reminded that they are not expected to adopt all the materials contained in this document for classroom use; indeed, it would be impossible to do so, because of the extent and variety of materials.

The strategies are only suggested approaches for teaching this curriculum. The variety of materials gives teachers options from which to choose in meeting the particular needs of their students. However, as a general guide to the time that should be allotted each theme, teachers can refer to the "Themes and Suggested Time Allotment."

It should be emphasized that although the materials contained within this document provide the ingredients for lessons, the strategies themselves do not constitute lesson plans, nor are they intended as substitutes for lesson plans. Teachers should, however, integrate the materials and strategies into their daily lessons plans.

Moreover, although this curriculum design contains a variety of materials not usually found in traditional textbooks, it is not intended as a replacement for the textbook; rather, these are supplementary materials which should enrich and enliven the teaching/learning process.

Social Studies Grade 5
Themes and Suggested Time Allotment

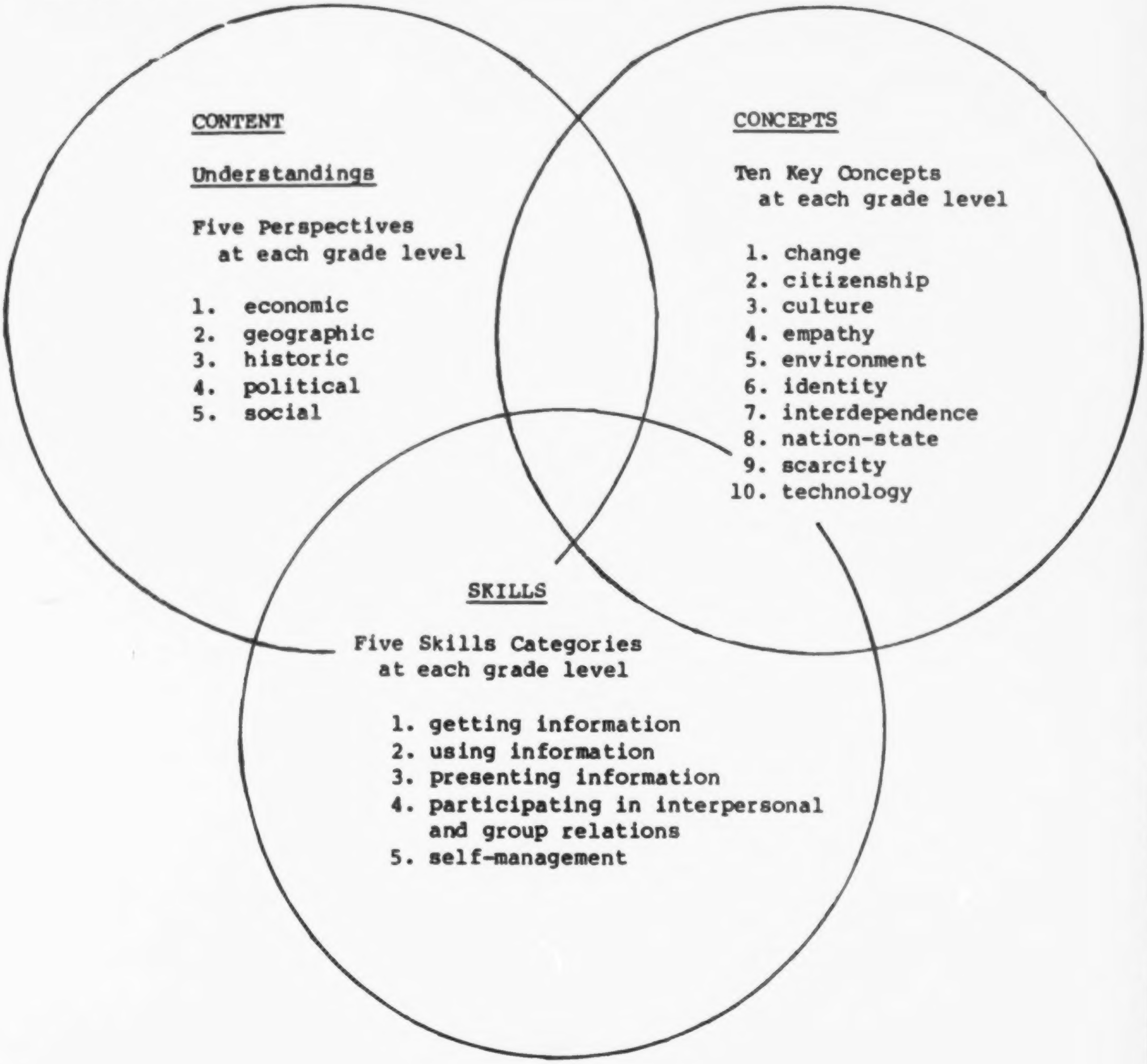
THEME I:	The Geography of Planet Earth Influences the Ways People Live	2 weeks
THEME II:	Our Mexican Neighbors Have Been Affected by Their Environment	6 weeks
THEME III:	Our Caribbean Neighbors Have Been Affected by Their Environment	7 weeks
THEME IV:	Our Central American Neighbors Have Been Affected by Their Environment	6 weeks
THEME V:	Our South American Neighbors Have Been Affected by Their Environment	7 weeks
THEME VI:	Our Canadian Neighbors Have Been Affected by Their Environment	6 weeks
THEME VII:	People in Regions of the United States Have Been Affected by Their Environment	4 weeks

The New York State Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Integrated Approach of Revised New York State Social Studies (K-6) Syllabus

The diagram below illustrates the approach to the social studies (K-6) curriculum taken in the New York State Regents Action Plan. Content understandings from each of the five perspectives are selected to build toward the learning of ten key concepts. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to plan each social studies lesson with regard to systematic skills development.

Definitions of the ten key concepts and elaboration on the five skills categories follow the diagram.



CONTENT

Understandings

Five Perspectives
at each grade level

1. economic
2. geographic
3. historic
4. political
5. social

CONCEPTS

Ten Key Concepts
at each grade level

1. change
2. citizenship
3. culture
4. empathy
5. environment
6. identity
7. interdependence
8. nation-state
9. scarcity
10. technology

SKILLS

Five Skills Categories
at each grade level

1. getting information
2. using information
3. presenting information
4. participating in interpersonal and group relations
5. self-management

Concepts of the Elementary Program

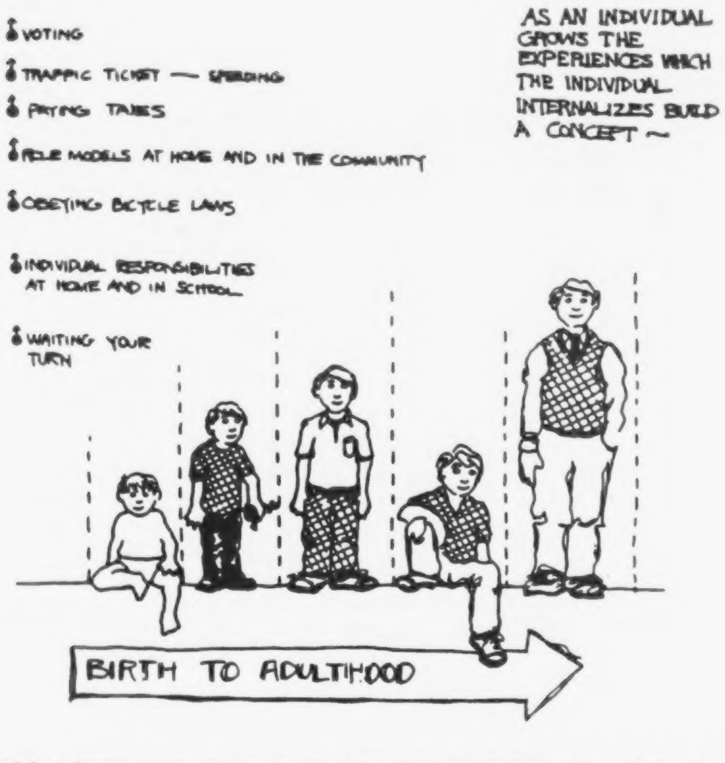
Concepts are content organizers. They are mental images or word pictures conveyed by a single word or word combination. The following characteristics apply to concepts.

A concept is:

- usually abstract, as opposed to concrete.
- a product of the analysis and synthesis of facts and experiences rather than a definition to be learned.
- constantly subject to expansion of meaning and delineation of detail, as experience provides different settings and different relationships in new contexts.

Illustrated graphically, a student grows to incorporate new experiences into his/her existing framework and at the same time modifies that mental framework, changing and extending it. Content understandings and activities are designed to foster conceptual growth.

All school and life experiences
influence a person's perception of
a concept such as ~ Citizenship


VOTING
TRAFFIC TICKET — SPEEDING
PAYING TAXES
ROLE MODELS AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY
OBEYING BICYCLE LAWS
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES AT HOME AND IN SCHOOL
WAITING YOUR TURN
AS AN INDIVIDUAL GROWS THE EXPERIENCES WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL INTERNALIZES BUILD A CONCEPT ~
BIRTH TO ADULTHOOD

Text and diagram adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), p. 2.

Definitions of Key Concepts in the Elementary Program

The ten keys concepts of the K-6 social studies curriculum are:

CHANGE
basic alterations in things, events, and ideas

CITIZENSHIP
membership in a community (school, state, nation...) with its accompanying behaviors, rights, and responsibilities

CULTURE
the way of living any society develops to meet its fundamental needs

EMPATHY
the ability to understand others through being able to identify in one's self responses similar to the experiences, behaviors, and responses of others

ENVIRONMENT
surroundings, including natural elements and elements created by humans

IDENTITY
awareness of one's own values, attitudes, and capabilities as an individual and a member of groups

INTERDEPENDENCE
reliance upon others in mutually beneficial interaction and exchange

NATION-STATE
a geographical/political organization uniting people by a common government

SCARCITY
the conflict between unlimited needs and wants and limited natural and human resources

TECHNOLOGY
the tools and methods used by people to get what they need and want

Adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), p. 3.

Skill Categories in the Elementary Program

1. GETTING INFORMATION

   A. Identifying sources of information (e.g., primary and secondary sources; tables; graphs; pictures, maps, artifacts)
   B. Locating sources of information (e.g., card catalogues, indices, tables of contents, museums)
   C. Identifying the types and kinds of information needed (e.g., recognizing relevant versus irrelevant information)
   D. Locating in sources the main elements (main ideas) and supportive elements

2. USING INFORMATION

    A. Classifying and/or categorizing data (e.g., placing ideas in order--chronological and other, identifying differences and similarities in data)
    B. Evaluating data (e.g., differentiating fact from opinion, identifying frames of reference, detecting evidence of propaganda)
    C. Drawing inferences from data
    D. Formulating and testing hypotheses
    E. Generalizing from data

3. PRESENTING INFORMATION

    A. Speaking in an effective way
    B. Using media and various visuals for communicating ideas
    C. Writing in an expository way

4. PARTICIPATING IN INTERPERSONAL AND GROUP RELATIONS

    A. Participating in group planning and discussion by following democratic procedures
    B. Assuming responsibility for carrying out tasks

5. SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

    A. Evidencing a growing capacity to explain why one might feel or act the same way as another, were one in the other's social and situational setting
    B. Demonstrating a decrease in ethnocentric and stereotypic perceptions
    C. Demonstrating an increase in the ability to empathize
    D. Demonstrating a growing capacity to accept diversity as inevitable and natural
    E. Developing constructive attitudes toward change, ambiguity, and conflict

Adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), pp. 5-9.

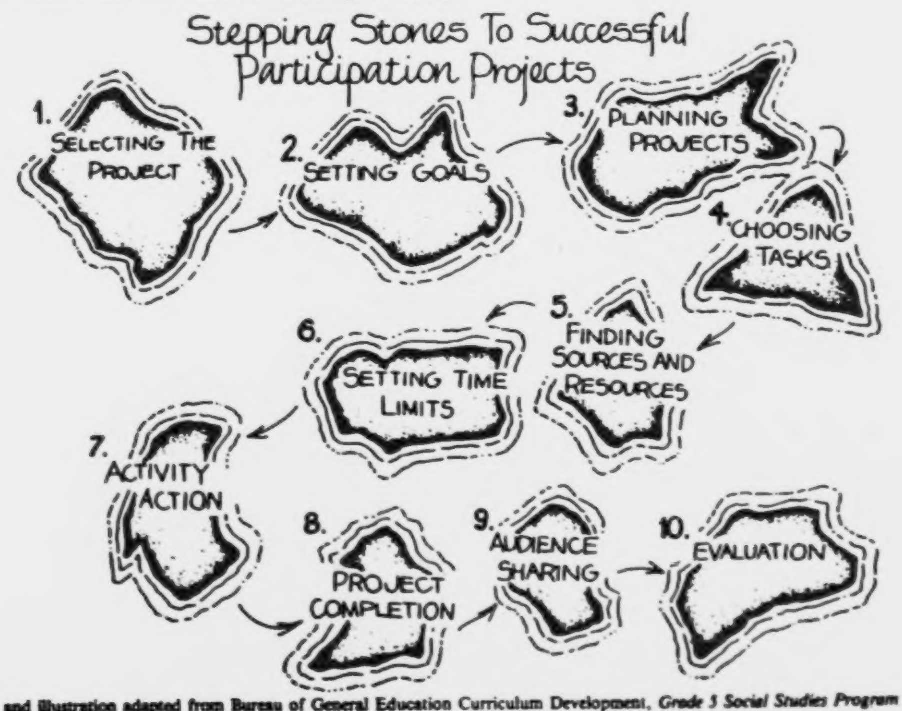
Developing Participation Projects

At every grade level (K-6), teachers are encouraged to work with students to plan and organize major Participation Projects. These projects provide excellent opportunities for accomplishing the following objectives:

- the development of meaningful relationships in the minds of students between content study and real-life applications of learned material and skills
- the meeting of the diverse needs of all types of learners through activities that allow for contributions from all pupils
- the integration of skills and processes with content learning
- the emphasis on active participation as a building block of citizenship

Because Participation Projects can extend over long periods of time and include all of the social science disciplines, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by their scope and range. However, the key to successful accomplishment of any of the Projects lies in the very title Participation Projects. The Projects are designed to be planned with students, and students are expected to carry out many of the major roles necessary for completion of the Projects as a vital part of the learning process. If the teacher's role is seen as a guide and facilitator, the task is reduced to manageable size.

The "Stepping Stones" guidelines that follow offer suggestions for developing and managing Participation Projects. The chart provides an outline of the sequence of major steps in any Participation Project. This can be copied and placed on a bulletin board. As each step is completed, an indicator can be placed on that step, supplying pupils with a visual record of what has been done and what needs to be accomplished.


Stepping Stones To Successful Participation Projects

Text and illustration adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), pp. 20-21.

Sample Grade 5 Participation Project

"Come to the Fair: The World in Our Community"

Each of the themes in Social Studies Grade 5 social studies includes one strategy which involves students in creating a fair, fiesta or carnival highlighting the culture of the country or region being studied. These strategies can be made the basis for an exciting Participation Project in which students create a Western Hemisphere fair that represents the ways various countries or cultures have influenced New York City.

By using tables or desks decorated as "booths," you can represent ways various cultures, countries, or time periods have become a part of our community's culture. Develop a fair to display and share products, crafts, and foods connected with each area. Involve parents and grandparents in contributing items and/or skills, such as teaching a craft or telling a folktale. Adding costumes would enhance children's appreciation for the uniqueness of varying cultures and our interdependence in a global world.

The following are some guidelines to assist the teacher in developing such a project:

Stepping Stone 1: Selecting the Project

Students should be a part of the process of choosing the Project to be undertaken. The teacher should provide students with at least two choices. Some additional grade 5 Projects--alternatives to a "Come to the Fair" Project appear on the following pages.

Stepping Stone 2: Setting Goals

After discussing all possibilities, the class which has chosen to create a Western Hemisphere fair might set the following goal: To represent how eight different nations or cultures in the Western Hemisphere have influenced culture in New York City.

Stepping Stone 3: Planning Projects

After brainstorming or "webbing," the class might decide to design and construct decorated "booths" for each country. They might decide that at each booth the following will be displayed: foods, crafts, games, music, costumes, folktale readings.

Stepping Stone 4: Choosing Tasks

At this step, committees can be formed. In doing so, students should be encouraged to honestly assess personal and group strengths and needs, talents, and weaknesses. A class whose goal is to create a Western Hemisphere fair might decide that one committee would become responsible for crafts, another for food, a third for music, etc.

Stepping Stone 5: Finding Sources and Resources

At this step it is important to emphasize going beyond books to include human and multi-media sources. Equally important is a stress on reaching out into the community. The student, for example, who is responsible for preparing the food to be featured at a nation's booth might begin by examining relevant sources, i.e., recipes, on the worksheets in the *Social Studies Grade 5* bulletin. After consulting cookbooks, etc., he or she might write or telephone the nation's consulate in New York City to ask for any relevant information it can provide. People in the community (relatives or friends who immigrated from that country) can be interviewed about dietary habits there. Typical recipes can be obtained. Willing cooks can be prevailed upon to create dishes for the fair.

Stepping Stone 6: Setting Time Limits

By postponing the setting of time limits to this stage of the Project process, students are more aware of the scope of the activity through their participation in planning and are better able to anticipate required amounts of time necessary for completion.

Stepping Stone 7: Activity Action

As each group works toward completion of its tasks, daily checks and weekly evaluation sessions, stressing constructive use of criticism, are imperative.

Stepping Stone 8: Project Completion

This stage involves setting standards, listing criteria, and assessing work to date. These steps form the basis for completion of the Project.

Stepping Stone 9: Audience Sharing

Other classes and parents should be invited to attend the fair. As students share the crafts they have made, the foods they have cooked, the games they have staged, and the folktales they have narrated, they will obtain feedback on their efforts. These opinions will be very important in helping children to realistically assess their work.

Stepping Stone 10: Evaluation

Essential to adult life is the ability to reflectively and critically evaluate one's work. Participation Projects should allow this process to develop in a nonthreatening atmosphere. This process might include evaluation forms, oral feedback, and critiques from the experts.

Text adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), pp. 22-23.

Suggested Participation Projects for Grade 5

Geographic Gleanings

The impact of geography on a community's growth and development can be made more relevant through a study of local geographic features as they influenced local growth. Geologic maps and surveys, and resource people (geologists, historians, economic experts) could provide input. Students could explore early settlement and economic development as related to geography and climate. They could map and chart economic areas in and around the community, and prepare the results as a display or booklet in a local library, town or city hall, or bank.

Econolinks: A Study of Our Community's Economic Links to the World

Economic interdependence can be made more relevant to students through a study of local business and industry links to the global world. Students could act as research teams assigned to study and record sources of raw materials and goods, markets, foreign offices, and other links outside of the community. Information could be mapped, charted, graphed, and compiled into a booklet that might be distributed through the local chamber of commerce or library.

Uniquely You

Students could develop an appreciation for individual uniqueness through journals, diaries, or visual forms related to themes concerning heritage and genealogy. They could be encouraged to incorporate their feelings in relation to inherited traits, qualities, physical attributes, and customs. Distinctions should be made between characteristics developed through family influences and those that make a person uniquely individual. Discussions should include the influences and effects of environment, family structure, and culture.

Child-to-Child Clubs

Encouraging children to share and communicate with peers in other cultures or countries has valuable benefits. Providing opportunities for such activities through the classroom structure of a "Child-to-Child Club" aids in keeping pupils attuned to the task, and encourages sharing of letters, feelings, stamps, and other items which might have been exchanged through correspondence. Discussions should be aimed at helping children appreciate likenesses, differences, and the qualities which make individuals and cultures unique. Varying the means of displaying information learned and sharing items would make pupils active participants in the planning, decision-making, and evaluative processes.

Journeys: The World in Our Community

Students could tour the community to locate and list signs of the influences and effects of other countries and cultures. Among topics to be noticed might be architectural motifs, religions, ethnic restaurants, and stores. Photographs, drawings, tapes, and poems could be used to record information gathered. These could be incorporated into a product (booklet, newspaper, etc.) to be shared with the community. This product could be presented at a formal gathering, with local officials, at a site such as the local historical society. Students should be assigned the management aspects of making the necessary arrangements for all aspects of the project.

Decision Dilemmas

By describing the life of a person from a designated culture, country, or time period (past, present, or future) in terms of dilemmas faced and decisions made, pupils could become involved in moral, political, and ethical issues of the times. Descriptions should be based on information gained through class study and/or research, with the addition of the feelings the person might have experienced as each dilemma was met and the effects of each decision became known. Comparisons to present-day dilemmas may be made and discussed. Dilemmas could be acted out, roleplayed, catalogued by categories, or written into simulations. Group and individual reactions could be listed, graphed, and discussed. Students could devise ways to present this information to a variety of audiences and find a means of involving the audience.

Artifact Attack

Students might collect, label, display, and explain artifacts relating to the study of a culture, country, or time period. In the absence of realia, pupils could research and create their own artifacts, incorporating these into a mini-museum. This could become an on-going project carried on throughout the year, or even become an integral part of the school, being added to continuously.

Walk-on Timelines

Gaining a sense of time as it relates to history is often difficult, but it could be developed through the experience of "walking through time." With students, make a timeline extending from the Earth's beginnings to the present, including the dates of major cultural developments, noteworthy events, and the growth of civilizations. Using mural paper or other sturdy materials, place the timeline on the floor of the school corridor and allow pupils to "walk through history," discussing items along the way. Appropriate murals, pictures, or posters placed on the walls to correspond with each major date would enhance the students' feel for historical distances, lengths of time, and important developments. Other lines could be placed next to the main line for comparison--a student's own timeline, family timelines, lines for individual countries or cultures.

Text adapted from Bureau of General Education Curriculum Development, *Grade 5 Social Studies Program* (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 1982), pp. 24-25.

Content Outline

THEME IV: OUR CENTRAL AMERICAN NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

A. Central American Peoples Are Affected by Their Physical Environment As They Attempt to Fulfill Their Basic Needs.

1. Between Mexico and the continent of South America are seven independent nations: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama.

   - Because this region lies like a bridge between the main body of North America and the continent of South America, it is called Central America.

2. Geography helps determine population distribution in Central America.

   - Most of the region's people live in the highlands where the climate is mild and the soil is fertile.

   - Greater numbers of people live on the Pacific coastal plains, the leeward side of the mountain range, than on the Caribbean coastal plains, the windward side.

3. In Central America the climate at any place depends largely on the altitude.

4. Central America's climate and soil help explain its major products. In the highlands, large coffee plantations produce about 10 percent of the world's coffee. On the wide plain along the Caribbean coast, large plantations produce about 13 percent of the world's bananas.

5. In building the Pan American Highway, disadvantages of the Central American physical environment, such as, high mountains, marshes, and tropical rain forests, have been overcome.

6. Earthquakes and volcanoes continue to plague the countries of Central America.

B. Both the Promise and the Problems of Central American Nations Today Are a Reflection of the Region's Past.

1. One of the oldest peoples of the pre-Columbian period, the Maya, by A.D. 300 had created an advanced civilization in Central America.

   - The Mayas were exceptional scientists, astronomers, and mathematicians. They developed an accurate calendar, scientific farming techniques and an elaborate religious society.

   - The Maya's urban masterpiece was Tikal, a city of nearly 100,000.

2. In the early 1500s, Spanish conquistadors, led by Pedro de Alvarado, defeated and conquered the already weakened Mayan empire.

   - The Spanish established a hacienda system in Central America. The Crown granted large estates, along with Indian workers, to reward leaders of great expeditions or friends of the king.

3. In 1821, a group of Creoles, as native-born colonists were called, issued a declaration of independence from Spain.

   - As a result, Central America, with the exceptions of Belize, a British colony, and Panama, part of a separate Spanish viceroyalty, became free of Spanish rule. Soon Panama also broke away from Spain, but it became part of Great Colombia.

   - The attempt in 1823 of the provinces to join together to form a single country called the United Provinces of Central America failed. The forces which bound the provinces together in the federation were outweighed by the forces which weakened it.

4. After independence, power in most Central American nations passed from the Spanish rulers to indigenous elites and the military.

   - In Guatemala, for example, large tracts of the best land have been seized from Indians and Ladinos, many of whom have been forced to work on that land for horrendously low pay.

5. The United States has been interested and involved in the nations of Central America since they achieved independence. Often the relationship has been an unhappy one.

   - In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt, desiring to build a U.S. controlled canal across the isthmus, took the (Panama) Canal Zone by encouraging a revolution in Panama.

6. Central America today is a region in turmoil.

   - After decades of rule by right-wing dictatorships, leftist insurgencies in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras grew.

   - In Nicaragua, after a civil war, the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista National Liberation Front ousted the dictator General Anastasia Somoza Dabayle and took control of the government.

   - The Contras, charging the Sandinistas with suppressing democracy in Nicaragua, are struggling against the Sandinistas to achieve power.

   - The United States government, determined to stop the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere, finds itself aiding the Contras.

C. Great Inequality Between Rich and Poor Characterizes Most Central American Nations.

1. Most of the people of the isthmus live very hard lives as evidenced by statistics on per capita income, literacy, medical care, and infant mortality.

2. In most Central American nations a small percentage of the population controls most of the wealth, while the majority of the people remain very poor.

3. A number of factors help explain the massive poverty of the majority of Central Americans.

   - In nations like El Salvador the best farmland, owned by some two hundred wealthy families and more than fifty multinational corporations, is used for growing export crops.

   - Often the only areas available for peasants either have poor soil or are located on steep mountains.

   - Most farmers have not been trained to rotate crops and use fertilizer.

4. To encourage the growth of democracy and to discourage the spread of communism, the United States under the Reagan administration has increased both its economic and military aid to the nations of Central America.

   - The exception is Nicaragua where a Marxist government is already in power.

D. Cultural Diversity Characterizes Central America

1. The population make-up of Central American nations reflect their histories.

   - Whites of European descent outnumber people of other ethnic/racial groups only in Costa Rica.

   - Indians are a much larger percentage of the population in Guatemala than in any other Central American nation.

   - Mestizos, or people of mixed Indian and European ancestry, make up the largest part of the populations of most Central American nations.

   - Brought as slaves to Belize, Blacks make up the largest part of that nation's population.

   - Most of the Blacks who form significant proportions of the populations of Nicaragua and Panama are descendants of free workers who migrated from the West Indies after slavery had been abolished.

2. Many Central Americans are Catholics. In some cases, however, their Catholicism has been fused with age-old Indian religious beliefs and rituals.

3. The typical village family in Central America is an extended one with several generations living together under the same roof.

4. Although most of the people in Central America live in rural areas, the cities in this region are growing rapidly.

5. Both Central American geography and history have influenced the customs and traditons of the people.

INTEGRATING SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 5, THEME IV WITH SCIENCE

Teachers may want to integrate the study of topics in Social Studies, Grade 5, Theme IV, with related topics in New York City's Science curriculum. Below is a list of some Theme IV topics and the chapters and pages in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction's Science bulletins which treat related subjects.

Social Studies Grade 5, Theme IV	Related Science Curriculum
Locating Central American Nations	Science, Grade 4: "Finding Directions with a Compass," p. 157.
Ecosystems in Central America	Science, Grade 5: "Little Environments," p. 50
Climate at Different Altitudes in Central America	Science, Grade 5: "Climate," p.106

Vocabulary

VOCABULARY TAUGHT IN THEME IV

The following vocabulary terms are taught in the word warm-ups in this theme:

Term	Subtheme	Strategy
adobe	C	3
archaeological dig	B	1
artifact	B	1
corruption	C	4
crater	A	7
elevation	A	1
environment	A	1
erupt/eruptions	A	7
federation	B	4
fertile	C	3
fertilizer	C	3
human-made features	A	1
infant mortality	C	1
isthmus	B	4
literacy rate	C	1
molten rock	A	7
natural features	A	1
natural resources	A	1
pictograph	A	3
province	B	4
site	B	1
social problems	C	1
volcanic debris	A	7

Subtheme A *Environment and Culture*

LEARNING ACTIVITY

RATIONALE

Stretching southeastward for about 1,300 miles between Mexico and the South American country of Colombia, Central America comprises seven independent nations: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, and Costa Rica. These nations share environmental characteristics which make them a geographic region.

The seven nations form an isthmus which connects the main body of North America and the continent of South America. A highland region extends through the isthmus like a giant backbone, and flat swampy lowlands extend along both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts. While a tropical climate characterizes the region, temperatures are cooler in the highlands, and rainfall is heavier on the Caribbean coast. This is due to the fact that mountains block the moisture-bearing northeast trade winds, shielding the Pacific lowlands from the heaviest rains. These climatic variations help account for the fact that the population of the isthmus is densest in the highlands and along the Pacific coast. Both the elevation of the land and climatic conditions help explain the fact that two very different farming regions exist on the isthmus--one in the highlands where coffee is grown, and the other on the wide Caribbean coastal plain where bananas are the chief crop. These cash crops are grown for export on large plantations, which in some Central American countries, particularly in Honduras and Guatemala, are foreign (mostly United States) owned. As these large plantations and haciendas have expanded, they have pushed poor farmers, or peasants, onto tiny plots of poor land. As a result, the typical Central American farmer is barely able to produce enough to feed his family. An understanding of this reality will be developed in later subthemes.

STRATEGY 1

Topic: What do photographs tell us about Central American environments?

The physical features of Central America include rugged, steep-sided mountains, many of which are volcanic, that run through the region like a giant backbone, and flat swampy lowlands that extend along both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts. The Isthmus of Panama is one of the two places where these lowlands stretch all the way across Central America.

Human features that typify the Central American region include architecture in the Spanish style, peasants employing the tools of traditional agriculture, small villages of huts with thatched roofs, the modern buildings of urban centers, and one of the best known 20th century technological developments in the region--the Panama Canal.

Concepts

- Environment
- Culture

Understandings

- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill basic needs.
- The physical environment is affected by people as they interact with it.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe various Central American environments.
- Make inferences from photographs about how Central American people meet their basic needs.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Categorize features of Central American environments as natural or human-made. (categorizing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students brainstorm both natural and human-made features of the environments surrounding their homes. Instruct them to be as specific as possible. As students identify, for example, an oak tree, a playground, a grocery store, a church, some bushes, etc., help them categorize each environmental feature under the following headings, which should be written on the chalkboard:

NATURAL FEATURES	HUMAN-MADE FEATURES

- Tell the class that today they will examine different environments in Central America, a region that is very important to the United States. They will try to identify both natural and human-made features of those environments.

Word Warm-up

- Review the meanings of these words: environment, elevation, natural features, human-made features, natural resources.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-1, "Central American Scenes." Have students, working in pairs, complete the exercise. Review their responses and then have students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What do these photographs show us about environments of Central America?
  - What do these pictures suggest about the temperature and rainfall of Central America?
  - What do these pictures show us about the elevations, soil, and plant life of Central America?
  - In these environments, how do you think Central Americans meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing? What evidence to answer this question is shown in the photographs? Explain.
  - Does the physical environment of Central America seem friendly to the people who live there? Explain.
  - Would you like to live in the environments shown in these pictures? Why or why not?
  - What do these photographs show about how people have changed the natural environment of Central America?
  - How does the physical environment in which you live influence the way you meet your basic needs? Have people changed the physical environment in which you live? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students make collages showing both the natural and human-made features of the New York environment.

Central American Scenes

TO THE STUDENT:

If you traveled in Central America, you might come upon the following scenes. Each environment includes natural features and human-made features. Look at photographs A to F. Then fill in the chart.

Photograph A

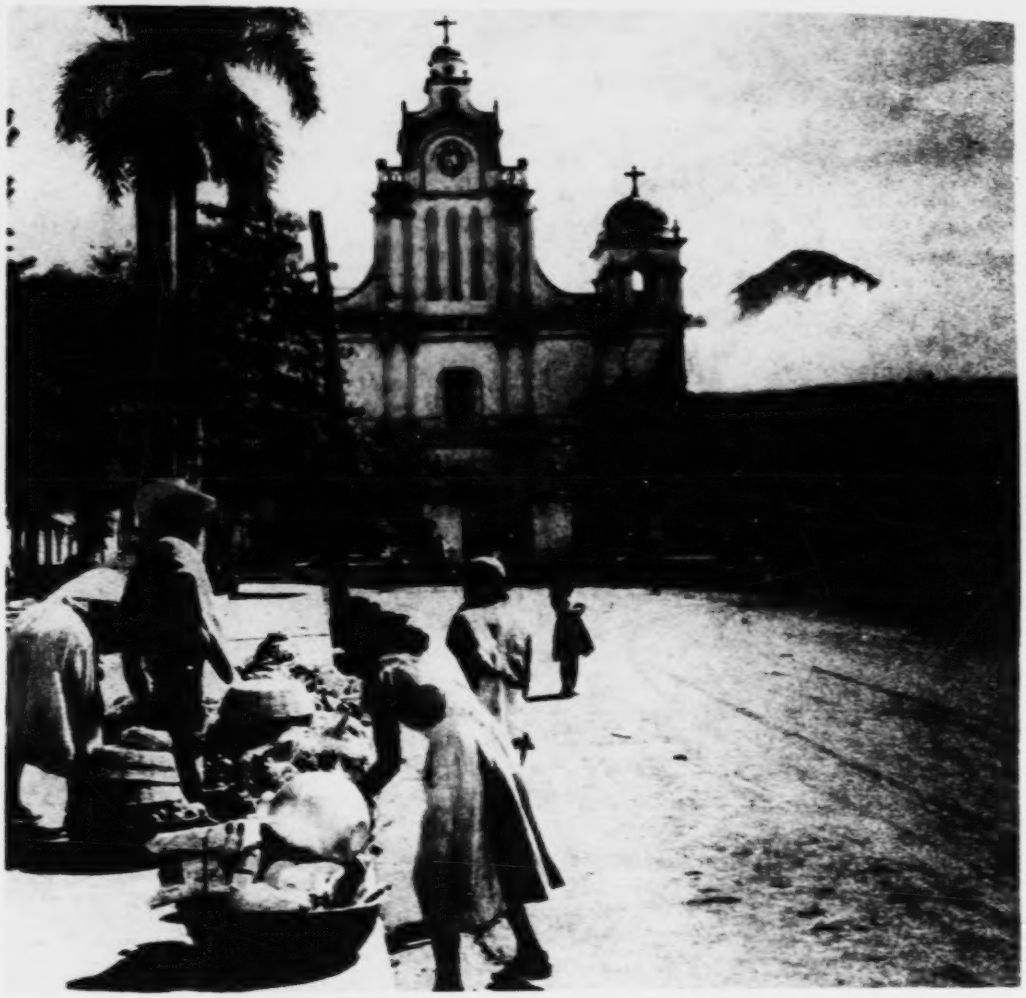


Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: Lippincott & Co., 1965), p. 24. Photo credit: United Nations. Permission pending.

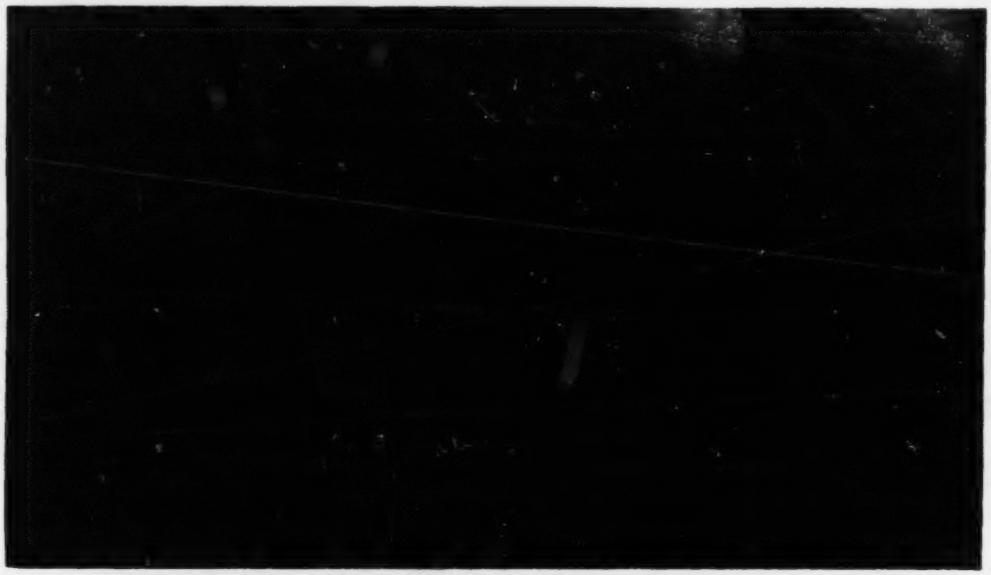
A church in the town of Izalco, El Salvador, with typical palm and pine trees. A volcano is in the background.

Photograph B

A banana plantation in the Caribbean lowland.

Photo from: Augelli, John P., editor, *Caribbean Lands* (Grand Rapids, MI, The Fideler Company, 1978), p. 15. Photo credit: Photo Researchers, Inc. Permission pending.

Photograph C



A typical Indian village in Central America

Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1972), p. 101. Photo credit: U.S. Information Services.Permission pending.

Photograph D

The natural resources of Central America include tropical woodlands. In this photo a road is being built in Nicaragua.

Photo from: Lye, Keith, *Take a Trip to Central America* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), p. 16. Permission pending.

Photograph E

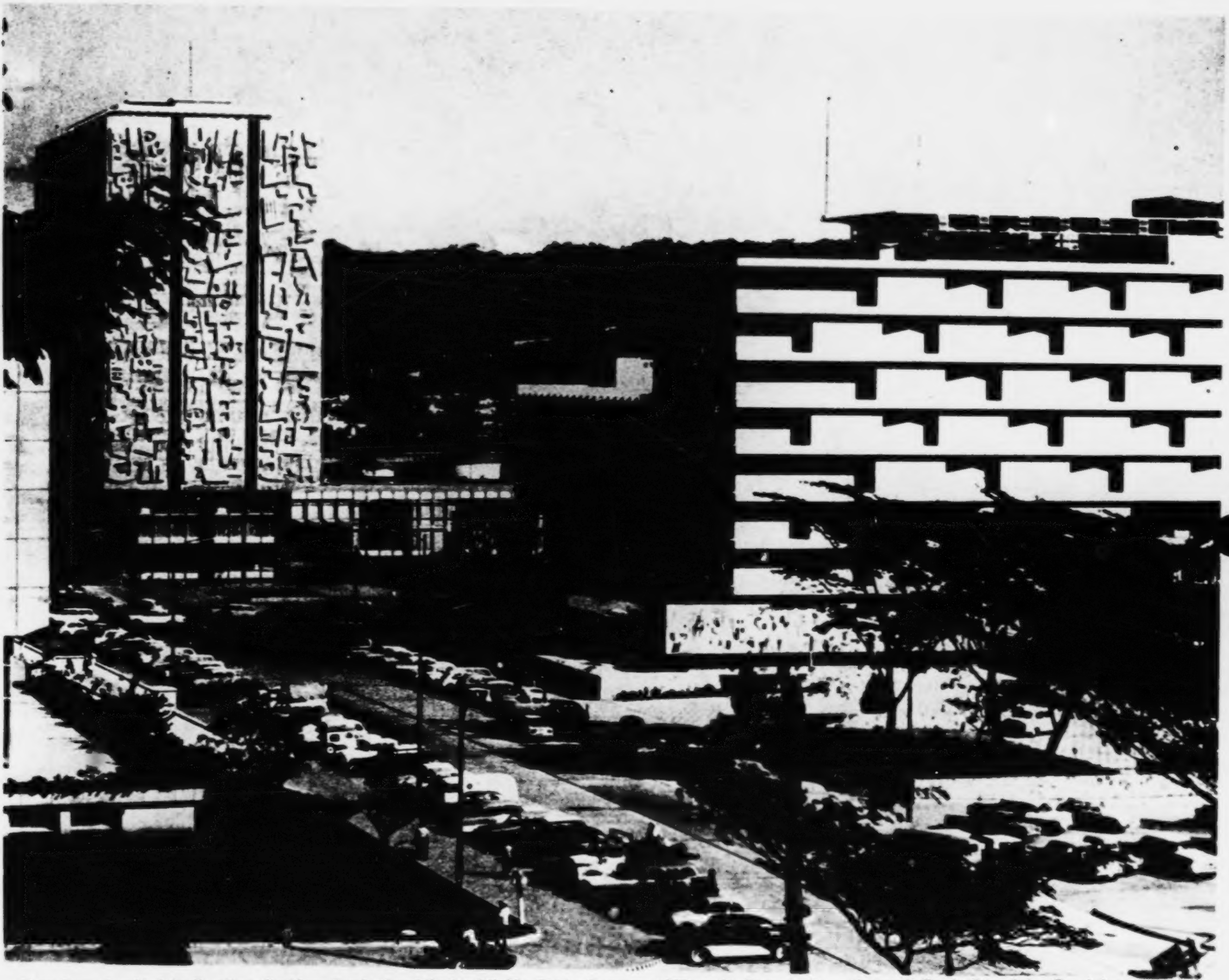


Photo from: Augelli, John P., editor, *Caribbean Lands* (Grand Rapids, MI, The Fideler Company, 1978), p. 91. Photo credit: Guatemala Tourist Commission. Permission pending.

Modern buildings in Guatemala City.

32

Photograph F

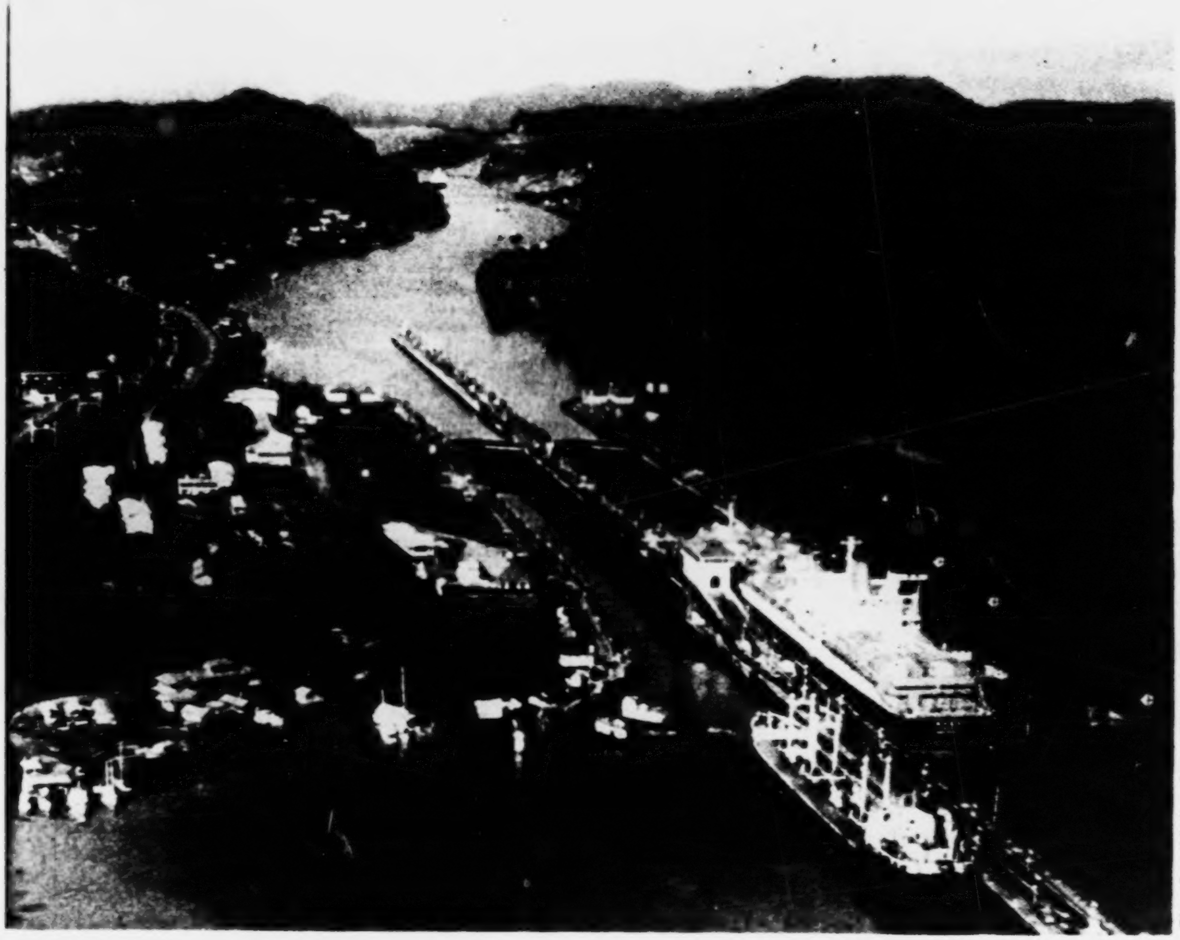


Photo from: Markun, Patricia Maloney, *Central America and Panama* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), p. 57. Photo credit: Panama Canal Commission.

A Japanese ship sailing through the Panama Canal.

TO THE STUDENT:

After you have looked at the photographs, fill in the chart below by listing natural and human-made features of the Central American environments shown in these pictures. An example is given in each column.

Natural Features	Human-made Features
1. Palm trees	1. Cars

STRATEGY 2

Topic: Why are the seven nations between Mexico and Colombia called "Central America"?

Between Mexico and the continent of South America are seven independent nations: Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama. Because the region lies like a bridge between the main body of North America and the continent of South America, it is called Central America. Its location makes the region strategically important to the United States.

Concepts

- Environment
- Nation-state

Understandings

- Political maps are those which show mainly countries and cities, that is human-made features of the Earth.
- The use of various grids, symbols, and notations makes it possible to locate specific places and to indicate distances and directions.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the strategic importance of Central America to the United States.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a political map of Central America. (interpreting a map)
- Use latitude, longitude, directions, scale of miles, and map symbols to locate specific countries and capital cities in Central America. (using latitude, longitude, etc.)

Springboard to the Activity

- On the chalkboard draw the following simplified "map" showing the three largest nations in North America. Have students suggest what should be added to this map to make it into a political map.

- Write the names of the three nations and their capital cities as students identify them.

- Tell students that today they will examine a political map of the region that lies just south of Mexico. This region is another part of the North American continent. It is called Central America.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-2A, "Political Map of Central America." Have students complete the exercises, and review them. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What features of Central America are shown on this map?

  - Why is this called a political map? How is it different from a physical map of Central America?

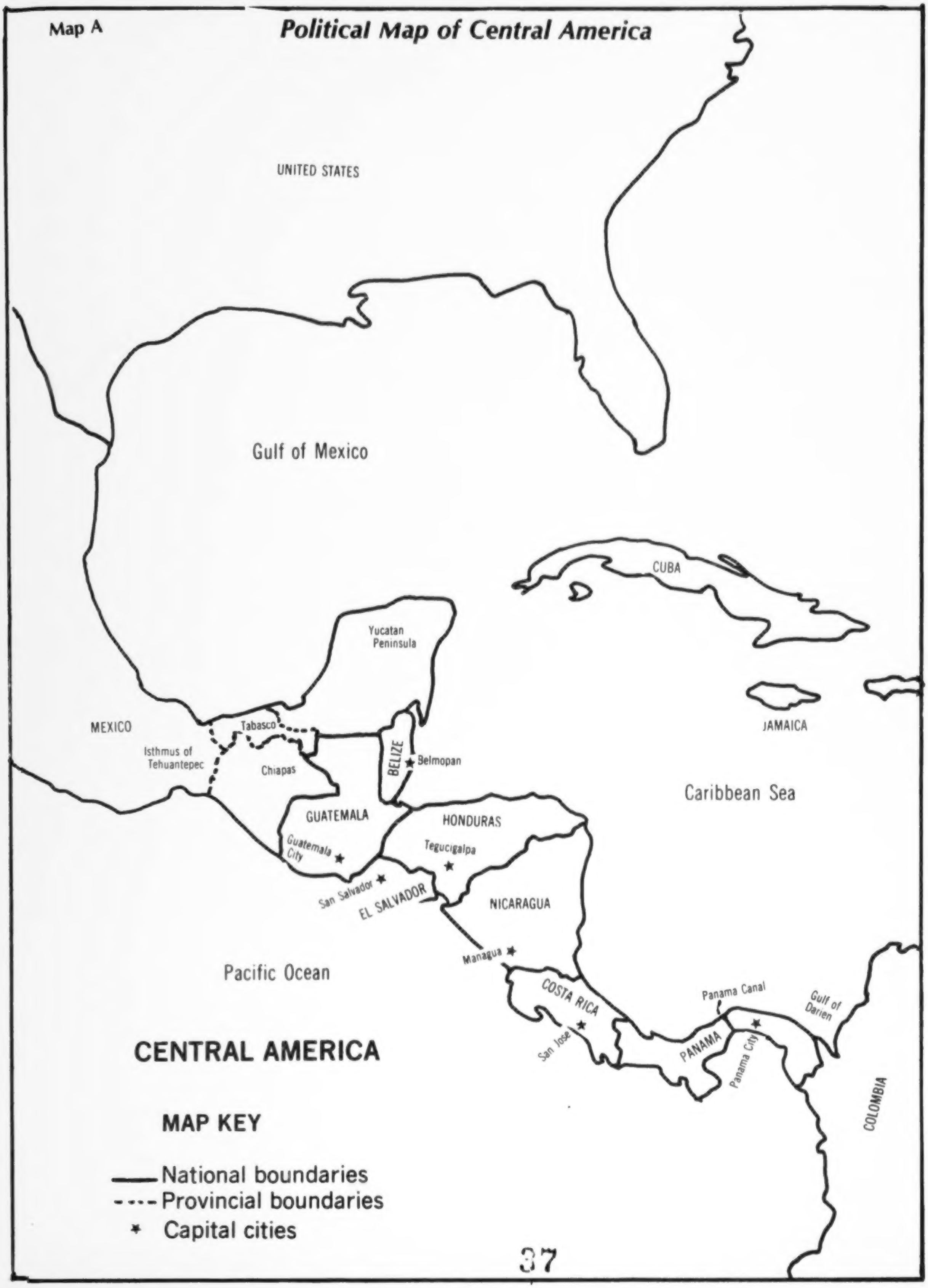
  - What reason does this map suggest for calling the seven nations between Mexico and Colombia "Central America"?

  - Look at the locations of the capital cities of the countries of Central America. What pattern do you see? What factors might explain this pattern? How could you check on the correctness of your answer?

  - The United States has long been interested in Central American events. Can you tell from their location one reason why the nations of Central America are so important to the United States? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Instruct students to color and label the Central American countries on the outline map provided on Worksheet A-2B. Then have students cut their maps into pieces. Have individuals exchange maps and put the pieces back together.



Map A

Political Map of Central America

UNITED STATES
Gulf of Mexico
CUBA
Yucatan Peninsula
JAMAICA
MEXICO
Tabasco
Isthmus of Tehuantepec
Chiapas
BELIZE
Belmopan
Caribbean Sea
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
Guatemala City
Tegucigalpa
San Salvador
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
Managua
Pacific Ocean
COSTA RICA
Panama Canal
Gulf of Darien
San Jose
PANAMA
Panama City
COLOMBIA
CENTRAL AMERICA
MAP KEY
National boundaries
Provincial boundaries
Capital cities
37

EXERCISE 1

TO THE STUDENT:

Use Map A to answer the questions below.

1. Which seven nations make up Central America?

_______________ _______________

_______________ _______________

_______________ _______________

____

2. What city is the capital of Nicaragua? _______________

3. San Jose is the capital city of _______________

4. Which two of the nations of Central America do not have coastlines on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean?

____

5. Which Caribbean island is nearest Central America?

____

6. What direction is Central America from the United States?

____

7. Which South American nation is nearest Central America?

____

8. Which Central American nation is home to a canal that connects the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean?

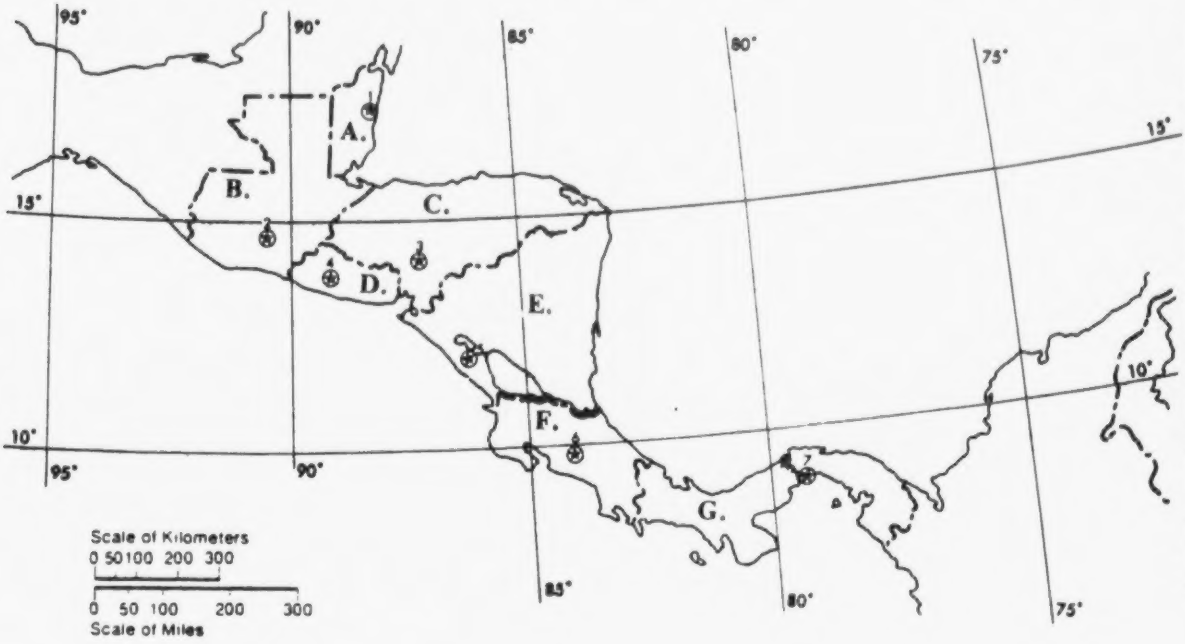
____

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Use both Map A and Map B to answer the questions below.

Map B


95°
90°
85°
80°
75°
15°
10°
A.
B.
C.
D.
E.
F.
G.
Scale of Kilometers
0 50 100 200 300
0 50 100 200 300
Scale of Miles

Map from: Drummond, Harold D., and Hughes, James W., *The Western Hemisphere* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1983).

1. The letters A to G on Map B are placed in Central American nations. Write the name of each nation on the correct line below:

A. ____________________
B. ____________________
C. ____________________
D. ____________________
E. ____________________
F. ____________________
G. ____________________

2. In the list in Question 1, draw a line under the letters of the nations which have a coastline on both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

3. In the list in Question 1, draw a circle around the letter of the country through which a canal passes.

4. On Map B, there is a number near the capital city of each country. Write the name of each capital city at the correct number on the map.

5. Write the names of the following places where they belong on Map B: Caribbean Sea, Pacific Ocean, Mexico, Panama Canal, and Colombia.

6. Identify the cities located at the nearest latitudes and longitudes for the following:

   a. 14°N, 91°W ____________________

   b. 9°N, 84°W ____________________

   c. 12°N, 87°N ____________________

7. Give the nearest latitude and longitude for the following Central American cities:

   a. Belmopan, Belize ________°N, ________°W

   b. Tegucigalpa, Honduras ________°N, ________°W

   c. Panama City, Panama ________°N, ________°W

8. Which of the cities referred to in Questions 6 and 7 is

   farthest south? ____________________

   Which city is farthest east? ____________________

   Which city is farthest west? ____________________

   Which city is farthest north? ____________________

9. How many miles would you have to travel to go from Tegucigalpa, Honduras to San Jose, Costa Rica? ____________

10. How many kilometers would you have to travel to go from Guatemala City, Guatamala to San Salvador, El Salvador?

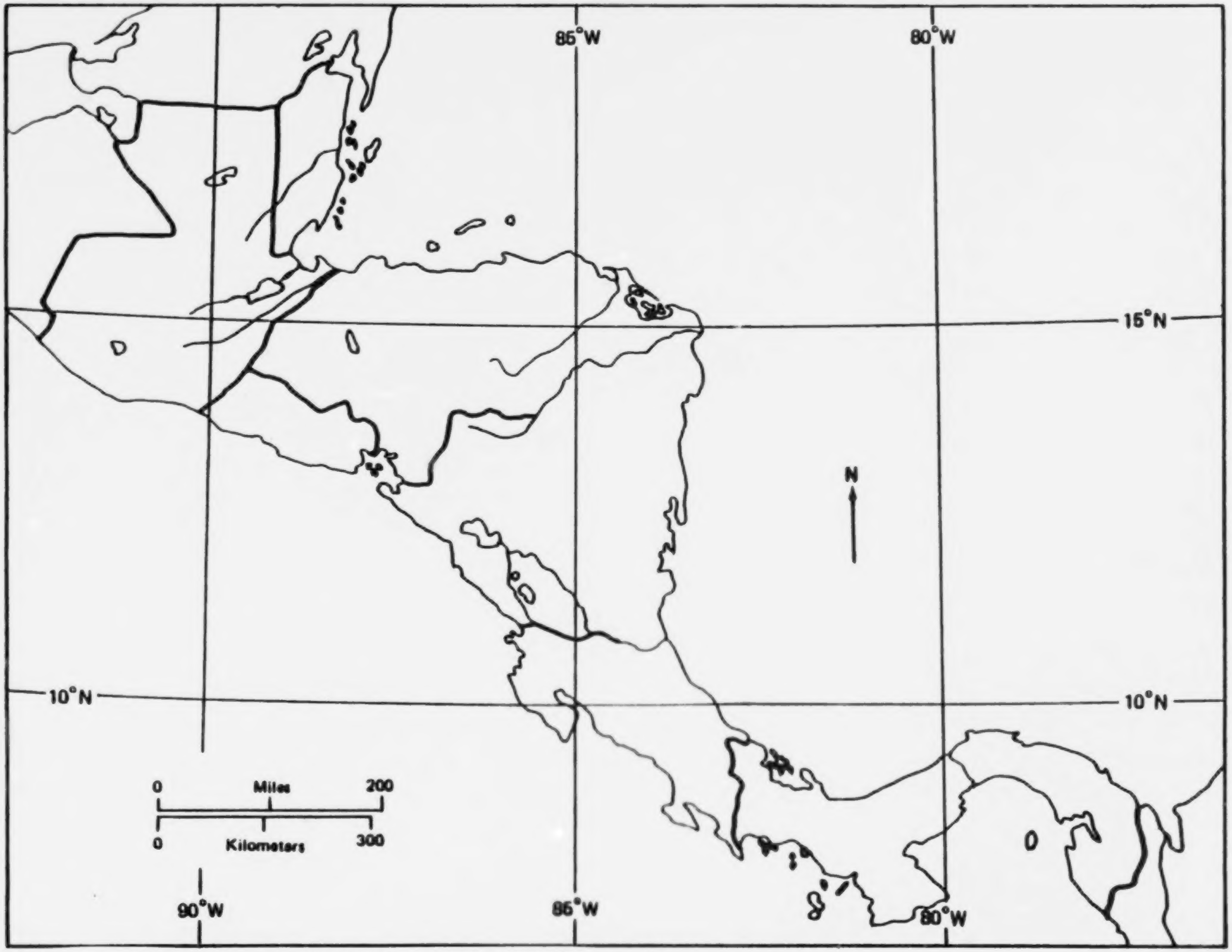
    ____

Theme IV *Central America*
Subtheme A *Environment and Culture*

Central America—Outline Map

Worksheet A-2B

Central America


85°W
80°W
15°N
N
10°N
10°N
0
Miles
200
0
Kilometers
300
90°W
85°W
80°W

Map from: Jarolimek, John, and Wortman, Miles, *Latin America and Canada* (NY: Macmillan, 1984).

STRATEGY 3

Topic: How does the geography of Central America help explain where its people live?

The nations of Central America are alike in that they have mountainous central areas and lowland plains along their coasts. Most of the region's people live in the highlands. Here the climate is mild, and there are many basins and plateaus with fertile soil. The proximity of the region to the Equator, however, makes the lowland areas very warm. The warm temperatures and ample moisture favor the growth of vegetation so dense that some lowland areas are jungles. Some of these areas are so hot and so very moist that few or no people live there.

Concepts

- Environment

Understandings

- An ecosystem is an environmental region that includes land forms, plant and animal life, natural resources, and climate all working together.
- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill basic needs.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the distribution of Central America's population in light of its geography.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a population distribution map and a population pictograph of Central America. (interpreting a map and a pictograph)

Springboard to the Activity

- Reproduce the following chart on the chalkboard:

ENVIRONMENT A (100 sq. miles)	ENVIRONMENT B (100 sq. miles)
1. good harbors	1. no outlet to sea
2. lots of natural resources	2. few natural resources
3. good farmland	3. poor, rocky soil
4. moderate climate--not too cold	4. very hot, humid climate
5. enough rainfall	5. very heavy rainfall

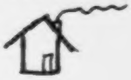
- Ask the class:
  - In which environment (A or B) would you rather live?

- Would you expect to find the greatest number of people living in Environment A or in Environment B? Which would you expect to be the most crowded? Explain.

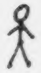
. Tell students that today they will find out why some parts of Central America are more heavily populated than others.

Word Warm-up: pictograph

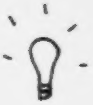
. Place these drawings on the chalkboard one at a time:



If you came across this, would you know what it stands for, or represents? What?



If you came across this, would you know what it stands for, or represents? What?



If you came across this, would you know what it stands for, or represents? What?

. Tell students that we call pictures like these pictographs. A pictograph is a picture that represents a word or idea. Point out that the letters pict in pictograph can help us remember the word and its meaning because they are the same letters as in picture.

Development

. Distribute Worksheet A-3A, "Where Central Americans Live." Have students first examine both the map and the graph and then complete the exercises. Review students' responses and then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- What does this map tell us about where Central Americans live? Is there a pattern of population distribution? Explain.
- Land areas that are heavily populated are called "densely populated." Land on which few people live is called "sparsely populated." Which parts of Central America are densely populated? Which are sparsely populated? Explain.

- Distribute Worksheet A-3B, "Population Detectives." Divide the class into small groups of equal size and have each group follow the directions on the worksheet. Have a representative of each group briefly explain the reasons the group gave for the distribution of population in Central America. Finally, have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What conclusions can we reach about why the people of Central America live where they do?

  - How have Central America's landforms influenced the distribution of the region's population?

  - Why do most Central Americans live in the hills and mountains rather than on the plains?

  - Have the locations of mineral resources influenced where the people of Central America live? Explain.

  - How do you explain the greater numbers of people living on the Pacific coastal plains than on the Caribbean coastal plains? (Students should recall from their study of the West Indies, Theme III, that the windward side of a mountain range receives more rain than the leeward side. This understanding will be treated again in Strategy 4 of this subtheme.)

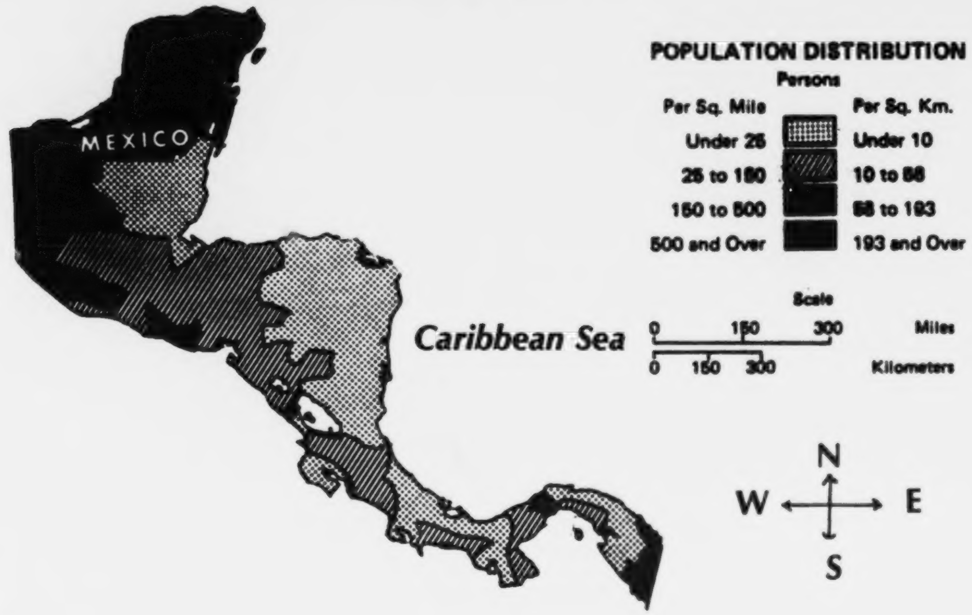
  - Do the factors that help explain the location of Central America's most populated areas also help explain the locations of dense populations in the United States? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students pretend to be employees of the U.S. Census Bureau doing an analysis of Northeast census figures. They have been asked to include in their report a paragraph explaining the relationship of natural environmental features to the dense population of the Northeast.

- Have interested students construct a salt and flour map of Central America. This can be fun and will help students get an understanding of the region's terrain.

Where Central Americans Live


MEXICO
Caribbean Sea
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
Persons
Per Sq. Mile
Per Sq. Km.
Under 25 — Under 10
25 to 150 — 10 to 58
150 to 500 — 58 to 193
500 and Over — 193 and Over
Scale
0 150 300 Miles
0 150 300 Kilometers
N
W
E
S

Map from: Augelli, John P., editor, *Caribbean Lands* (Grand Rapids, MI, The Fideler Company, 1978), p. 81.

EXERCISE 1

Base your answers to the following questions on the above map:

1. What is the title of this map?

____

2. What does the symbol ▦ mean? ____________________

3. What does the symbol ▨ mean? ____________________

4. Where in Central America do the fewest people per square mile live? ____________________

5. Where in Central America do the greatest number of people per square mile live? ____________________

6. What good guesses can you make to explain where the people of Central America live? List three or more guesses.

1. ____

____

2. ____

____

3. ____

____

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Examine this pictograph. Then answer the questions below.

1. What is the title of this pictograph?

____

2. What does the symbol stand for?

____

3. Why is this called a pictograph?

____

4. How many people live in Panama?

____

5. How many people live in Honduras?

____

6. Which Central American nation has the highest population?

____

7. Which Central American nation has the lowest population?

____

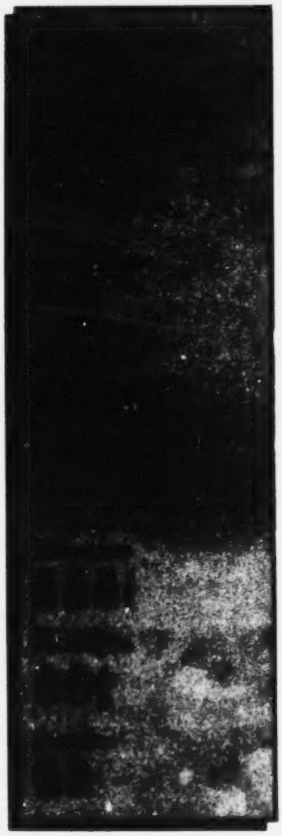


Illustration from: Joan Schreiber, et al., *Western Hemisphere: Latin America and Canada—Teacher's Edition* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman and Co., 1983), p. 290.

Population Detectives

TO THE STUDENT:

Imagine you are a population detective. Identify three or more reasons for the locations of areas of dense population in Central America. To do this you will need to look at the next page and examine the political/physical map, the landforms map, the ecosystem map, and the mineral resources map you find there.

Consider the following as you figure out why large numbers of Central American people live where they do:

- nearness to good harbors
- natural resources
- nearness to good farmland
- higher altitude, which makes the climate cooler
- the leeward side of a mountain (the side that faces away from the moisture-bearing winds) on which less rain falls than on the windward side

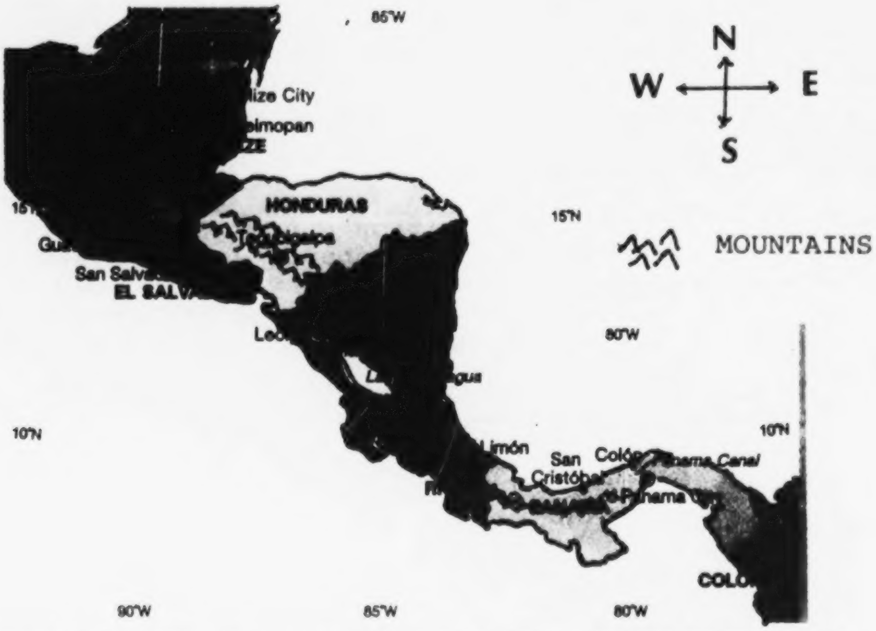
Now, in the space below, write your three reasons for the locations of Central America's densely populated areas:

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

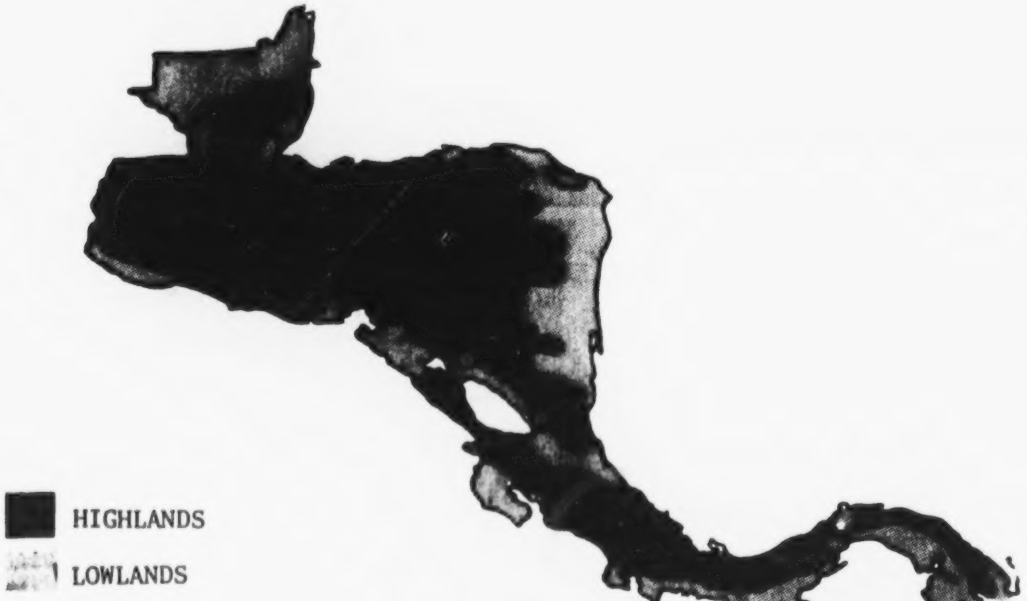
3. ______________________________

Map A: Political/Physical Map

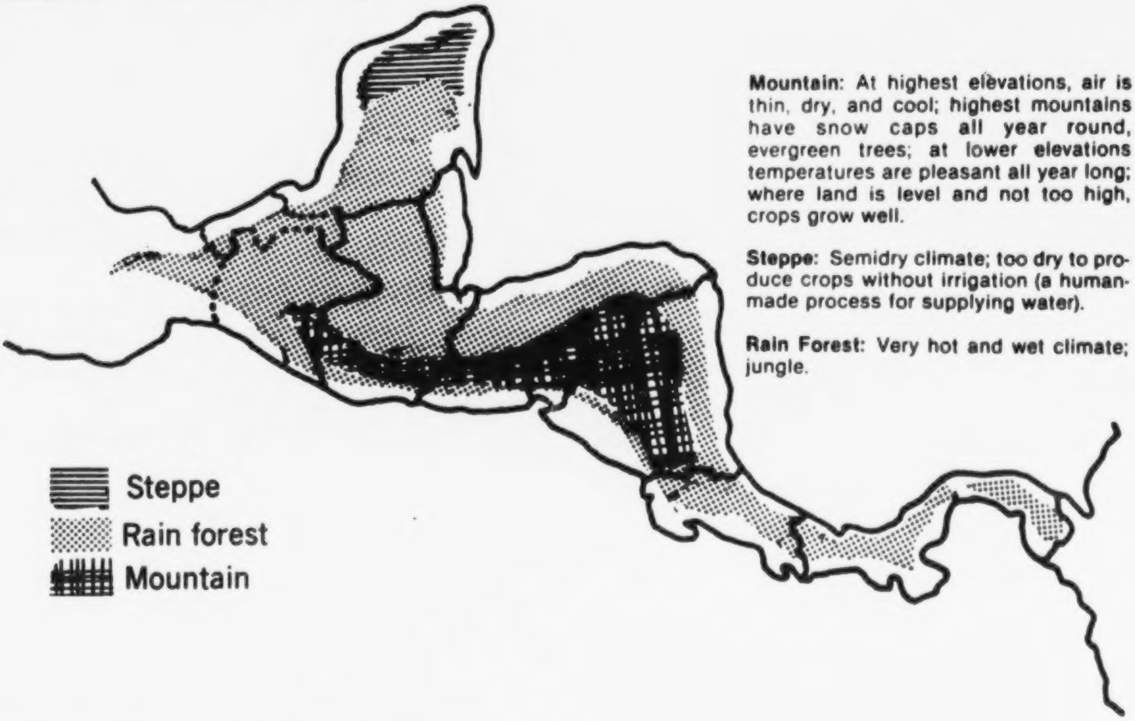

85°W
lize City
elmopan
IZE
HONDURAS
15°N
15°N
Tegucigalpa
Gu
San Salva
EL SALVA
Leo
80°W
L
gua
10°N
10°N
Limón
San
Cristóbal
Colón
Panama Canal
R
PANAMA
Panama City
COLO
90°W
85°W
80°W
N
W
E
S
MOUNTAINS

Map from: Jarolimek, John and Wortman, Miles, *Latin America and Canada* (NY: Macmillan, 1984), p. 267. Permission pending.

Map B: Landforms Map


HIGHLANDS
LOWLANDS

Map C: Ecosystems Map



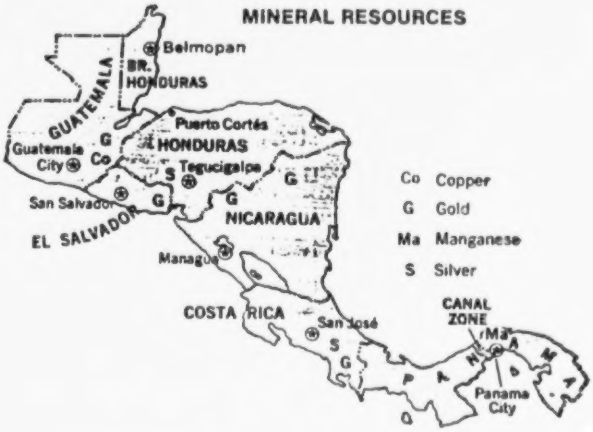
▤ Steppe
▨ Rain forest
▦ Mountain

Mountain: At highest elevations, air is thin, dry, and cool; highest mountains have snow caps all year round, evergreen trees; at lower elevations temperatures are pleasant all year long; where land is level and not too high, crops grow well.

Steppe: Semidry climate; too dry to produce crops without irrigation (a human-made process for supplying water).

Rain Forest: Very hot and wet climate; jungle.

Map D: Mineral Resources Map



MINERAL RESOURCES
Belmopan
BR. HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
Guatemala City
G
Co
Puerto Cortés
HONDURAS
Tegucigalpa
S
G
G
San Salvador
G
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
Managua
COSTA RICA
San José
S
G
CANAL ZONE
Ma
PANAMA
Panama City
Co Copper
G Gold
Ma Manganese
S Silver

Map from: Fincher, Ernest B., *In a Race with Time—An Introduction to Latin America* (NY: Macmillan, 1974), p. 95. Permission pending.

STRATEGY 4

Topic: How can the various climates found in Central America be explained?

In Central America the climate at any place depends largely on the altitude. In the lowlands along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, the weather is hot or very warm during every month of the year. On the Caribbean side of Central America heavy rain falls all year long. This is caused when the moist northeast trade winds, upon reaching the mountains of Central America, are forced to rise. As they rise, they become cooler and lose some of their moisture in the form of rain. Land on this rainy side, the windward side of Central America, is covered with tropical rain forests.

The second kind of Central American climate is found among the foothills of mountains and on inland plateaus. These areas are between the high mountains and the coastal plains. The climate in this part of Central America is cooler. Less rain falls than on the coastal plains. Many crops--such as coffee, cotton, tobacco, corn and wheat--grow well in these areas. Most cities have been built here.

The third kind of climate in Central America is found in the high mountains. This land sometimes has frost. Nights are always cool. The middle of the day can be cool or warm. Wheat, potatoes and some corn are grown, but people have to work hard to make the earth yield crops. Sheep are grazed here as well.

Concepts

- Environment

Understandings

- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill basic needs.
- Climatic patterns are influenced by the interactions of various geographic factors.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the relationship between altitude and climate.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret line and bar graphs showing climate (temperature and rainfall) at different altitudes in Central America. (interpreting a graph)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students imagine that half the class has been invited to vacation for two weeks in the Catskill Mountains; the other half of the class has been invited to vacation at the Jersey shore. Ask the class:
  - What types of clothing would you pack for each environment?
  - What temperatures would you expect?

- Would you pack an umbrella?

- Tell students that today they will examine the climate of three Central American countries--one located in the highlands or mountains, one located at sea level, and one located on a plateau (an area of level land higher than sea level but not as high as a mountain).

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-4, "Altitude and Climate."

- Have students look first at the temperature graph for Colon, Panama and review with them how to read and interpret a graph such as this. Repeat for the rainfall graph for Colon.

- Now have students complete the exercise and then explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What do these graphs show about temperature and rainfall in the three Central American cities?

  - What do these graphs show about the relationship between climate and altitude in Central America?

  - Why is the temperature cooler at higher altitudes?

  - Colon, Panama is located on the windward side of Central America--the side that faces the northeast trade winds which carry moisture from the Atlantic Ocean. Guatemala City is located on the leeward side of the isthmus--on slopes that face away from the wind. How do these different locations help explain the different rainfall patterns in the two cities?

  - Which of the three cities do you think would be best suited to human life? Explain.

  - The populations of the three cities are: Colon--86,000; San Salvador--440,000 and Guatemala City--701,000. How do the graphs help explain these population figures?

Summary/Application

- Have students pretend they are taking a trip to Central America and list on a chart the articles of clothing they will pack, taking climate into account, for a stay in each of the three cities on the worksheet.

Climate at Different Altitudes in Central America

TO THE STUDENT:

The graphs below show both temperature and rainfall in three Central American cities. Examine each graph carefully and think about:

1. how temperature and rainfall differ in these three cities.
2. how each city's altitude affects its climate.

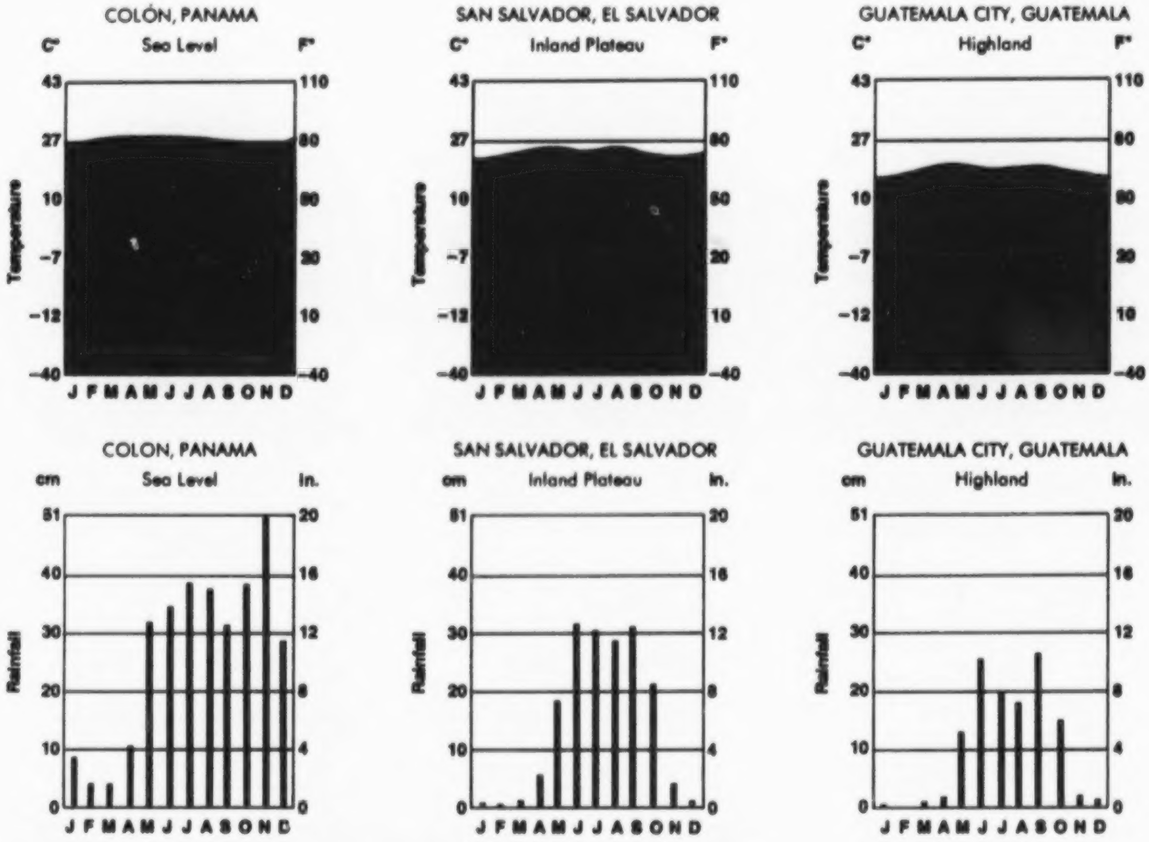


Illustration from: Drummond, Harold D., and Hughes, James W., *Journeys through the Americas:* Teacher's Edition (Our World Today Series) (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1981), p. 450. Permission pending.

TO THE STUDENT:

Use the graphs you just examined to answer the questions below:

a. Which of the three cities is at the highest altitude?

____

b. What two things about climate are graphed here?

____

____

c. What temperature (Fahrenheit) is reached in Colon, Panama during the month of December? ________________________

d. Which of the three cities has the warmest year-round temperature? __________________________________

e. What is the highest temperature (Fahrenheit) reached during the year in Guatemala City, Guatemala? ____________________

f. How many inches of rain fall in San Salvador, El Salvador during the month of July? ____________________________

g. Which of the three cities has the hottest and wettest climate?____

h. Which of the three cities has the coolest and driest climate? ______________________________________

i. What conclusions can you draw from these graphs about the relationship between altitude and climate? _________________

____

____

STRATEGY 5

Topic: How does the natural environment of Central America help explain the region's major products?

The economies of the nations of Central America are based primarily on agriculture. While history in part accounts for this (as colonies Central American nations were prohibited from industrializing), the region's climate and soil also help to explain its major products.

Two very different farming regions exist on the isthmus. One, in the highlands, has mainly large coffee plantations which produce about 10 percent of the world's coffee. The second farming region is on the wide plain along the Caribbean coast. Here large plantations produce about 13 percent of the world's bananas. Other major food products from plantations in Central America are cacao, citrus fruits, and chicle. Central America also exports meat as well as raw materials like cotton and rubber.

Concepts

- Environment

Understandings

- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill their basic needs.
- Geographic features and climatic conditions influence land usage.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify the major products of Central America.
- Use a product map to make inferences about the climate and soil of Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Categorize the products of Central America. (categorizing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask students:
  - If we were going to create a product map of the United States, what would be some of the products we would include? (Students should, in addition to agricultural products, mention a number of manufactured goods such as cars, computers, clothing, televisions.)
  - How does the natural environment of the United States help explain its major products? (Children might know, for example, that Florida's climate and soil are suited to growing citrus fruits, that the environment of New York and New Jersey is suited to dairy products, that oil is found in Texas, that cars are manufactured in the Midwest near iron-ore deposits.)

- Tell students that now they will examine the major products of Central America.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-5, "Major Products of Central America." Have students, working in pairs, complete the exercise, and then review it. Finally, have students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What does this map tell us about the major products of Central America?
  - What kinds of items are produced in Central America?
  - What do the products of Central America suggest about the region's natural environment (soil, climate, natural resources, etc.)?
  - Judging from this map, do Central American nations seem to be very industrialized? Explain.
- Divide the class into seven small groups of equal size. Assign to each group one of the nations of Central America. Instruct members of each group to bring to class the next day small pieces of as many of their assigned nation's products as they can. (If it is impractical for them to bring the product, have them bring illustrations.) Help students make their own product map of Central America by attaching their "products" to the appropriate nations on a large map of the region.

Summary/Application

- Interested students might research and report on the various steps involved in bringing any one of the products of Central America to the consumer. Students should depict these steps on a large poster which can then be used as a visual aid during the class presentation. For example, a chart showing the steps involved in bringing the cocoa bean to the consumer might look like the following:

STEPS IN THE PREPARATION OF COCOA BEANS

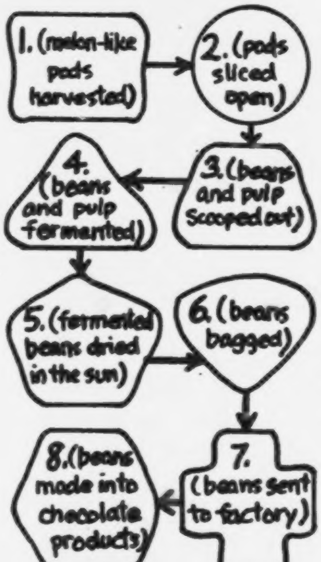
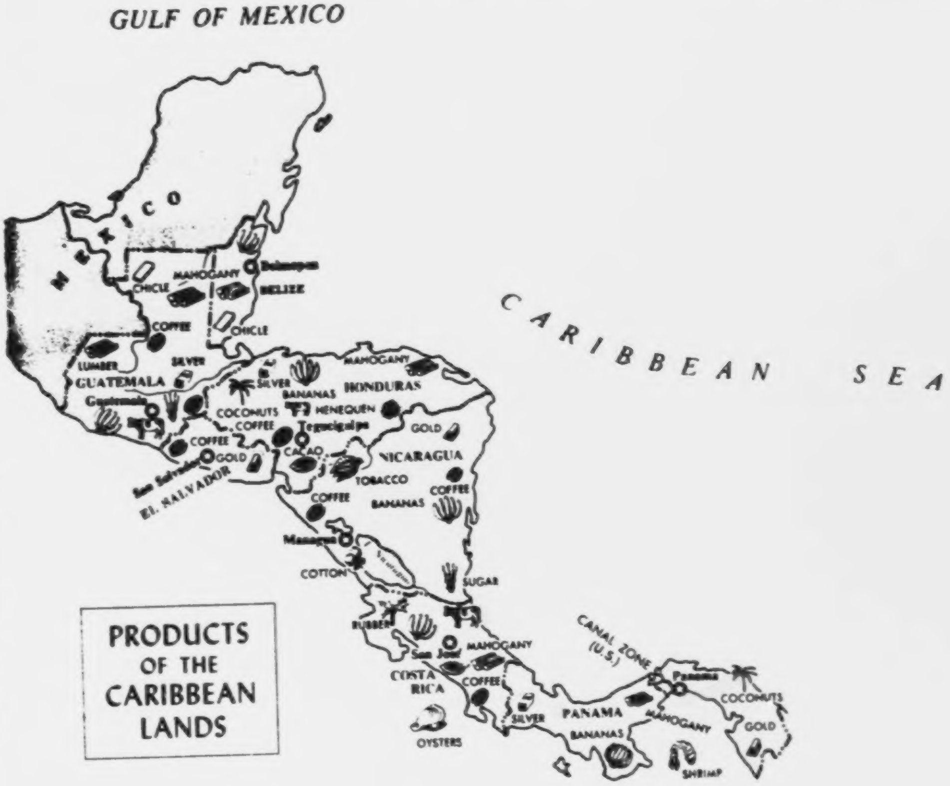

1. (melon-like pods harvested)
2. (pods sliced open)
3. (beans and pulp scooped out)
4. (beans and pulp fermented)
5. (fermented beans dried in the sun)
6. (beans bagged)
7. (beans sent to factory)
8. (beans made into chocolate products)

Illustration from: Joan Schreiber, et al., *Western Hemisphere: Latin America and Canada —Teacher's Edition* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman and Co., 1983), p. 298.

Products of Central America

TO THE STUDENT:

Look at the products of Central America shown on the map below. Place each product in a category in the chart at the bottom of the page.


GULF OF MEXICO
MEXICO
Belmopan
MAHOGANY
CHICLE
BELIZE
COFFEE
CHICLE
LUMBER
SILVER
GUATEMALA
Guatemala
SILVER
MAHOGANY
HONDURAS
BANANAS
HENEQUEN
COCONUTS
COFFEE
Tegucigalpa
GOLD
COFFEE
San Salvador
GOLD
CACAO
NICARAGUA
EL SALVADOR
TOBACCO
COFFEE
BANANAS
COFFEE
Managua
COTTON
SUGAR
RUBBER
San José
MAHOGANY
COSTA RICA
COFFEE
OYSTERS
SILVER
CANAL ZONE (U.S.)
Panama
COCONUTS
PANAMA
BANANAS
MAHOGANY
GOLD
SHRIMP
CARIBBEAN SEA
PRODUCTS OF THE CARIBBEAN LANDS

Map from: Cutright, Prudence, and Durand, Loyal, *American Neighbors* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 282. Permission pending.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS	MINERAL RESOURCES	NATURAL RESOURCES (other than minerals)

STRATEGY 6

Topic: How have disadvantages of Central America's physical environment been overcome in building the Pan American Highway?

Just as the Panama Canal links two oceans, the Pan American Highway, when completed, will link North America and South America.

A highway extending from Alaska to Chile in South America was first proposed in 1923. It would truly unite the Americas, its backers declared. High mountains, marshes, and tropical rain forests in Mexico and Central America have been the main problem in completing this highway. Construction of the highway continues despite problems. Eventually this road will facilitate north/south travel and trade in Central America.

Concepts

- Environment
- Technology

Understanding

- The effect of geography has been moderated by humans through the use of technology.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Analyze the Central American terrain to design a transportation system for the region.
- Explain how in building the Pan American Highway technology is being used to overcome disadvantages of the Central American physical environment.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a topographical map of Central America as well as a map showing the Pan American Highway. (interpreting a map)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of how people have used technology to overcome disadvantages of the New York physical environment. For example, ask the class:
  - Why have people built huge skyscraper apartment and office buildings in New York City? (To overcome the limited land relative to population.)
  - How do the tunnels that have been built across the East and Hudson Rivers make travel easier?

  - How is the air conditioning found in most New York stores and offices a way of using technology to overcome the disadvantages of New York's summer climate? Explain.

- Tell students that today they will examine one of the ways that technology is being used to overcome disadvantages of Central America's geography.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-6A, "Where To Build a Highway?" Have students, working in pairs, decide where they would build a north/south highway through Central America. Instruct them to draw their road on the map, complete the exercise, and be ready to identify the geographic obstacles, e.g., mountains, they would have to overcome.

- Have volunteers tell the class where they decided to build their road and why.

- Distribute Worksheet A-6B, "Pan American Highway in Central America." Give students time to examine the map carefully and compare the placement of the highway with where they had located their own road. Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What are some of the natural barriers that engineers have had to overcome in building the Pan American Highway?

  - What is the importance of the Pan American Highway to the people of Central America? to the people of all the Americas?

  - Is the Pan American Highway a desirable change for Central America? Why or why not?

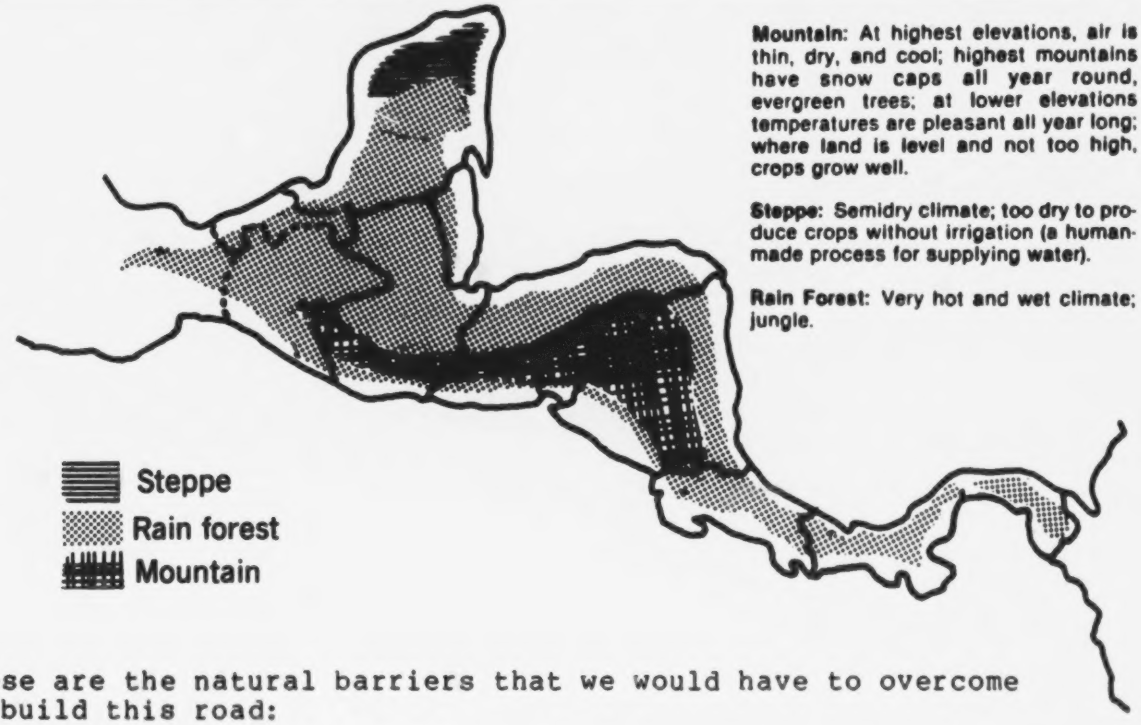
Summary/Application

- Have students select a physical environment and brainstorm ways to overcome its disadvantages. Students may wish to research advances in technology related to their ideas.

Where To Build a Highway?

TO THE STUDENT:

The map below shows the various ecosystems of Central America. Pretend you are an engineer. Your job is to design a highway to run all the way from the northernmost tip of Central America to its southernmost tip. Decide where you would construct your road and draw it on the map. List in the spaces provided below all the natural barriers that would have to be overcome in building your road.



Mountain: At highest elevations, air is thin, dry, and cool; highest mountains have snow caps all year round, evergreen trees; at lower elevations temperatures are pleasant all year long; where land is level and not too high, crops grow well.

Steppe: Semidry climate; too dry to produce crops without irrigation (a human-made process for supplying water).

Rain Forest: Very hot and wet climate; jungle.

These are the natural barriers that we would have to overcome to build this road:

____

____

____

____

____

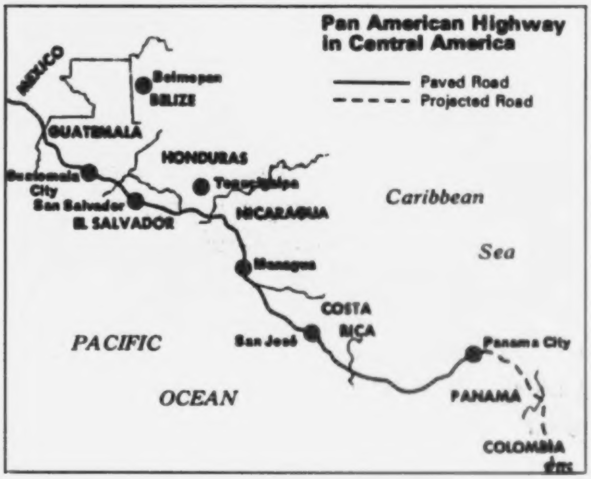
____

Worksheet A-6B

Pan American Highway in Central America

TO THE STUDENT:

The map below shows a real highway that has almost been completed through Central America. What natural barriers have had to be overcome to build this road? Refer back to the map on Worksheet A-6A.


Pan American Highway in Central America
Paved Road
Projected Road
MEXICO
Belmopan
BELIZE
GUATEMALA
Guatemala City
HONDURAS
Tegucigalpa
San Salvador
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
Caribbean
Sea
Managua
COSTA RICA
San José
PACIFIC
OCEAN
Panama City
PANAMA
COLOMBIA

Map from: Buggey, JoAnne, *Latin America and Canada:* Annotated Teacher's Edition (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1983), p. 189. Permission pending.

STRATEGY 7

Topic: How have natural disasters affected the people of Central America?

Earthquakes and volcanoes plague the countries of Central America. In 1976, parts of Guatemala City were leveled by a massive earthquake which left many thousands dead or injured and over a million people homeless. Many of Central America's mountains, as in Mexico, are volcanic. Some are close to major cities.

Concepts

- Environment
- Culture

Understandings

- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to meet their basic needs.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the natural disasters which plague Central America.
- Explain the effects of these natural disasters on Central American nations and peoples.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify supporting details in a reading about natural disasters in Central America. (identifying supporting details)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of natural disasters that have occurred in the United States. Ask the class:

  - Have you heard on the radio, seen on television, or read in newspapers about any of these natural disasters: tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes?

  - How would you define the term natural disaster?

  - What would it be like to live in a region where natural disasters happen frequently?

  - What problems would you have to solve if you lived where there were natural disasters?

- Tell students that today they will examine some of the natural disasters that strike Central America.

Word Warm-up

- Teach the meanings of the following words by having the students refer to the diagrams on Worksheet A-7A, "Natural Disasters,": erupt/eruptions, volcanic debris, crater, molten rock.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet A-7A, "Natural Disasters." Have students complete the exercise and then explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What part do natural disasters play in the Central American environment?
  - How do volcanoes form? How do volcanoes erupt?
  - What effect did the earthquake that hit Guatemala in 1976 have on that country?
  - How do you think the people of Central America feel about living in the midst of natural disasters? How would you feel?
  - Do these natural disasters influence Central America's ability to make progress? Explain.
  - Are natural disasters a fact of life in any part of the United States? Explain.
- Distribute Worksheet A-7B, "The Indian Explanation." Read the folktale aloud as students read along. Have students complete the exercise and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story did the Cuna Indians tell to explain the formation of hills and mountains in Panama, and the occurrence of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions?
  - Why do you suppose the Cunas told this tale?
  - According to the folktale, how did the Indians of Panama feel about the events that they believed led to hills, mountains, earthquakes, and volcanoes?
  - Have peoples outside of Central America explained nature in ways similar to the explanation of the Cunas? Explain by giving examples.

Summary/Application

- Have interested students research a specific volcanic eruption or earthquake in Central America and then prepare and perform a "TV News Report" about it. Students should answer the following questions in their stories: What happened? Where did it happen? Who was there? What effects did the disaster have? Students should refer to a map as their stories unfold.

AND DID YOU KNOW?

On February 4, 1976, the eastern and central regions of Guatemala were hit by a terrible earthquake. Highways split apart, railroad tracks buckled and bridges collapsed. In all, the tragedy affected some 2.3 million people, with 25,000 dead, and 75,000 injured. Over 500,000 children were left homeless. Authorities estimate that one-fifth of the country's population lost their homes in this disaster. One-half of the schools and 80 percent of the hospitals in the area were also destroyed. Health and social services, which were already poor, were left severely crippled.

Even with help from other governments, it takes a long time for a country to recover from earthquake damage.

Photo from: Drummond, Harold D., and Hughes, James W., *The Western Hemisphere* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1983), p. 205. Photo credit: Agency for International Development. Permission pending.

Natural Disasters

Central American Courier

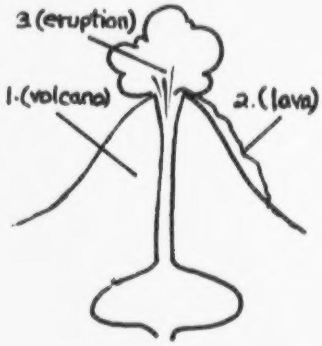
Natural Disasters

Map from: Augelli, John P., editor, *Caribbean Lands* (Grand Rapids, MI, The Fideler Company, 1978), p. 10.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the biggest volcanic explosions ever recorded took place in 1902 when Santa Maria in Guatemala erupted. It covered an area of 9 miles (14km) with volcanic ash and lava.

Central America is a region of many volcanoes. Below the earth's surface, rock is melted by great heat caused by pressure. When the pressure is great enough, the melted rock or lava is forced up through the crater or opening. This is called an eruption.



EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT:

The main idea of the Central American Courier's special feature edition is written below. In the spaces A and B, write two facts which support the main idea.

Central America is a region of many natural disasters.

A.

B.

The Indian Explanation

TO THE STUDENT:

The Cuna Indians tell the following tale to explain the hills, mountains, earthquakes, and volcanoes of Panama:

The Disobedient Giant

When the Spaniards landed in Panama in the 16th century, they found the country inhabited by many Indian tribes. One of the most important was the Cuna, a highly civilized people, proud and fiercely independent.

According to tales told by the Cuna Indians, the region of Panama was once a level plain, only slightly higher than the sea. It was easy to plant and cultivate corn and other vegetables there. And, since everything grew out in the open, wild berries were easy to find. The sea also provided them with abundant food.

The Indians did not know why god Oba had chosen to make their particular region flat, but in the beginning it did not matter, for the Cunas were happy in their mountainless land.

But, with the first bad winter storm, the winds blew across the plain. There were no hills or mountains to lessen the gale. Huge waves were whipped to a frenzy and tore out of the ocean in a mad torrent. With nothing to turn it back, the turbulent water rolled far inland, destroying many homes and uprooting the crops.

For days the people waited for the winds to cease. But the storm continued. It was not safe for the canoes to put out to sea. No fish were caught. The land was soaked with sea water. The food was uneatable. Before long, the children cried from hunger.

Not knowing what to do, each family gathered within its own group and prayed to Oba for help.

"We must come together as a tribe and pray," said the oldest of the wise men, "for Oba cannot hear our single prayers above the storm."

So, on the following day, all the people trudged farther inland and met on a damp, grassy meadow. Together they stood with uplifted hands and cried in a mighty voice asking the god Oba's help against the fierce storms. Then they sat down humbly and waited for an answer. It was not long in coming.

The oldest of the wise men spoke: "Oba hears our prayers. He is sending his son, the giant Ologuitur, to help us."

The people rose as one, shouting and cheering, calling out thanks to Oba. How joyous they were as they returned to their water-soaked houses and fields, for they felt safe and secure, knowing that god Oba would help them.

Meanwhile, Oba sent for his son, Ologuitur, who was asleep on a large white cloud. As usual, he left all the work to his older brothers. It was only because the giant son looked as if he had nothing to do that Oba chose him to go down to Earth to help the Cuna Indians.

When Ologuitur was awakened by his father's messenger, he was grumpy and made the heavens rumble with his yawning and growling. He reluctantly left his soft bed and appeared before Oba.

When the son heard of his task, he scowled. "Get one of my other brothers to go, Father, I'd rather stay here."

"You must go at once, for the others are already busy. Now leave without another word!" commanded his father.

Although Ologuitur knew he dared not disobey, he took his time in making the journey. Therefore, the storm continued for several days and the land became more waterlogged than ever.

When at last Ologuitur reached Earth, he found it difficult for someone his size to tread the wet ground without sinking waist-deep into the mud.

The giant plowed through the wet seashore, to the boundary of the Cunas' land, through the ruined corn field. Here lay thousands of mammoth boulders. They covered the countryside as far as the eye could see.

"Aha!" cried the giant, "these rocks will make it easy for me! I'll simply roll enough of them over the plains to the seashore and make a mountain high enough to turn back the water."

While he was thinking out his plan, the storm continued to grow worse.

"It's too uncomfortable to work now," he thought. "I'll go back to the sky and return later, when the wind has died down and the waves are calm."

So Ologuitur returned to the heavens, hoping to wait out the storm on a comfortable downy cloud. But Oba stood at the entrance of his home, wearing a stern frown.

"Why have you not helped the Earth people?" he demanded.

"It will suit me better to wait until tomorrow, when the weather is clear," the son replied with an indifferent air. "Then I'll go back and build hills and mountains for them."

"You'll return now!" roared the father angrily. In a rage, he grabbed his son and flung him back toward Earth.

Down, down, tumbled the giant, tearing through clouds and scattering the winds. As he collided with a rainbow, it temporarily broke his fall, but on he went with the speed of a great meteor until he was driven into the center of the Earth.

Fortunately for Ologuitur, the ground had been so softened by the continuing rain that he received only slight bruises and scratches.

When his head stopped spinning, the giant looked around. All was dark. There were no heavenly stars. There were no white clouds to sleep upon. There was no moon to guide his way. Even though he was a giant, Ologuitur was afraid.

"I must find my way out of this dark place," he said, groping around.

He stood up tall and strong and started searching for an escape. He walked on and on, stopping to rest from time to time, for he was not used to the weight of the Earth on his head and shoulders.

Far above Ologuitur, in the land of the Cunas, strange events were taking place. The Earth trembled. Hills and mountains appeared over the once level plain. Slowly but surely the storm died down, beaten to a halt by these new barriers.

The wise men of the Cunas gathered together and they learned--although no one knows how--that Ologuitur, son of Oba, was bringing about these miraculous changes on the Earth's surface. Mountains were formed while he was walking. Hills rose up when he sat down to rest.

The Cuna Indians of today believe that Oba's giant son still dwells far below the Earth. Although he no longer makes hills and mountains, he often causes the Earth to tremble and shake. He does this as he crawls on all fours through the dark underground passages looking for the light.

After centuries of searching, he still has not found his way out of the Earth. Sometimes, when he calls for help, his roars burst through the top of the mountain, and his breath comes steaming forth, causing a volcano. His voice often frightens the Indians, but nevertheless they will always be grateful to him for their beautiful hills and mountains.

Adapted from "The Disobedient Giant" from Barlow, Genevieve, *Latin American Tales,* illustrated by William M. Hutchison (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1966), pp. 97-103. Rights held by Macmillan, Inc. Permission pending.

TO THE STUDENT:

Number the following events in the order in which they happen in the folktale:

___A. The Cuna prayed to Oba for help against the fierce storm.
___B. The giant Ologuitur tumbled into the center of the Earth.
___C. Sometimes, when Ologuitur calls for help, his roars burst through the top of the mountain, and his breath comes steaming forth, causing a volcano.
___D. The Cunas lived and farmed happily in a mountainless land.
___E. Oba sent his son, the giant Ologuitur, down to Earth to help the Cuna.
___F. After deciding to wait until the storm's end to build some mountains for the Cuna, Ologuitur returned to heaven.
___G. Hills and mountains appeared over the once level plains and the storm died down.
___H. With the first bad winter storm, the winds blew across the plain, soaking the land with sea water and ruining the crops.
___I. Oba, angry with his son, flung him back to Earth.
___J. As Ologuitur crawls below the Earth looking for the way out, he makes the Earth tremble and shake.

Subtheme B *Past and Present*

LEARNING ACTIVITY

RATIONALE

To be understood, the current political turmoil in Central America should be examined in light of the isthmus' past. In the early 1500s, Spaniards, led by the conquistador Pedro de Alvarado, conquered and laid claim to the lands of the once magnificent Maya--then moved on to take the rest of the isthmus. Although the climate and terrain discouraged the Europeans from active involvement in the viceroyalty (comprised of the provinces of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica), a landed aristocracy was created. Indians became serfs on the large estates, or haciendas, which had been granted by the Spanish king to his friends. When independence was finally achieved in 1823, an attempt at federation was made by the former Spanish provinces, based on the United States model. The attempt failed. By 1843, the provinces had opted to become separate independent nations. Political life in these nations, however, throughout the first century of their existence, was characterized by chaos and tyranny. The people were unprepared for self-government. Consequently, a succession of repressive military dictators, often supported by the United States, ruled in most of the nations of Central America. The left-wing insurgencies in Central America today, with which the United States is now so concerned, must be seen at least in part as responses to years of corrupt right-wing governments. The question of United States involvement in current Central American affairs must also be seen in historical context. A critical examination of United States involvement in Central America over the past 150 years helps explain the suspicion with which our intentions there today are viewed by many Central Americans.

STRATEGY 1

Topic: What do their artifacts tell us about the ancient Maya?

Long before Europeans arrived, the Maya had developed a great civilization in Central America. Probably originating in Guatemala, the Maya spread into the Yucatan (Mexico), where their civilization reached its greatest height. One of the oldest peoples of the pre-Columbian period, the Maya created an advanced civilization that was in full bloom by A.D. 300. Although the Maya borrowed ideas from earlier peoples of Middle America, they created a distinctive culture and were great innovators in their own right. As they were exceptional scientists, astronomers, and mathematicians, the Maya developed the world's most accurate calendar, scientific farming techniques, and an elaborate religious society. They were also fine artists, architects, and sculptors, and they excelled in the arts of jewelry-making and weaving. The Maya's urban masterpiece was Tikal, a city of nearly 100,000, a population far greater than any European city at that time.

Concepts

- Culture
- Change

Understandings

- The artistic and recreational activities of people are a reflection of their values and beliefs.
- In the course of time, great civilizations have flourished and declined.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify the achievements of Mayan civilization.
- Evaluate the features of Mayan civilization.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a map and timeline of Mayan civilization. (interpreting maps, timelines)
- Draw valid conclusions about Mayan civilization from artifacts. (drawing conclusions)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask the class:
  - If our class were to bury a time capsule to be opened by people in the 2080s, what items would we include to best show American culture in the 1980s?
  - Why would you include each item?
  - From the contents of our time capsule, would people of the 21st century get a true picture of what 20th century American life was like? Why or why not?

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- Tell students that today they will read about the Maya, a civilization that existed hundreds of years ago in Central America. The students will examine some of the Mayan objects which have been excavated by archaeologists.

Word Warm-up:

- Review the meanings of these words: artifact, archaeological dig, site.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet B-1A, "Mayan Civilization." Have students read the articles, examine the map and the timeline, and complete the exercises. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - Who were the Maya?
  - Where did they live?
  - When did Mayan civilization flower?
  - What have archaeologists been able to tell us about the Maya? How have they learned about these ancient people?

- Distribute Worksheet B-1B, "The Mayan Legend." Read it to the students as they follow along, or have them read it silently. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - According to Mayan legend, how were the Earth and its people created?
  - Why do you think the Maya told this legend? How does it compare to the creation stories of other cultures? Explain.

- Distribute Worksheet B-1C, "Archaeological Dig." Divide the class into four groups and assign two or three items on the worksheet to each group. Have each group, in the role of archaeologists, analyze the assigned Mayan artifacts and, as directed in the exercise, list in the appropriate spaces on the worksheet some "educated guesses" that the artifacts suggest about Mayan life.

- Have a spokesperson report each group's guesses. Have students complete their individual charts as the groups give their reports.

- Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What do these items tell us about Mayan life--about their art, religion, economy, architecture, science, etc.?
  - Will studying these artifacts give us a true picture of what Mayan life was like? What kinds of information might be left out? What are the weaknesses of using this method to learn about a past society?

- Based on these artifacts, do you think the ancient Mayan civilization was a great civilization? Explain.

- How does the ancient Mayan civilization compare to our modern American civilization? Explain.

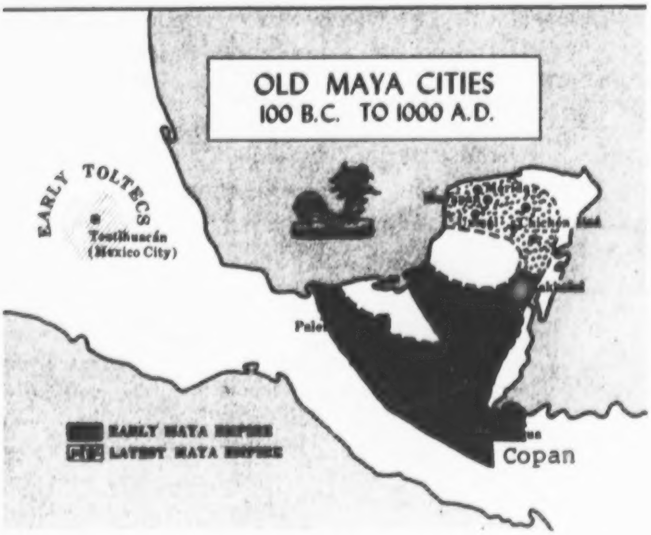
Summary/Application

- Have students make collages showing objects from American life in the 1980s that, they think, best typify our culture.

Mayan Civilization

Archaeology Today

Special Feature—The Maya


OLD MAYA CITIES
100 B.C. TO 1000 A.D.
EARLY TOLTECS
Teotihuacán
(Mexico City)
Mérida
Chichén Itzá
Pale
Copan
EARLY MAYA EMPIRE
LATEST MAYA EMPIRE

Map from: Cutright, Prudence, and Durand, Loyal, *American Neighbors* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 179. Permission pending.

MAYAN CIVILIZATION

By digging deep into the Central American earth, archaeologists have made some exciting discoveries about the ancient Maya. A study of Mayan writing, as well as Mayan objects (or artifacts) shows that the Maya had the most advanced civilization of all the people living in Central America before the Europeans came.

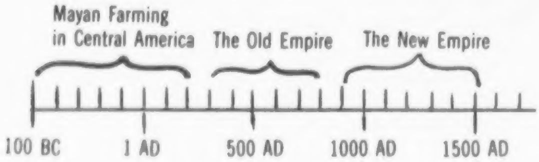
Archaeology has shown that most of the Maya were farmers. They were the first to grow Indian corn (maize) and beans. The Maya also grew sweet potatoes, squash, chili peppers, tobacco, and cotton.

Because their land and climate were so favorable, Mayan farmers needed only a small part of the year to plant and harvest their crops. Then the farmers were free to spend the rest of the year building great cities. More than one hundred Mayan cities have been dug up, or excavated. Each of these cities has at least one temple dedicated to a Mayan god. These temples were decorated with beautiful sculpture and paintings.

The great achievements in Mayan art and science were made between about A.D. 300 and 800. Historians call this period the Early Mayan Empire or the Old Empire. No one knows why, but sometime after A.D. 800, the Maya abandoned their great cities in Central America. The people may have left because of diseases or because the soil became less fertile and no longer produced good crops.

During the 900s, however, a new Mayan civilization, the New Empire, grew up in the northern part of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. It lasted about four or five hundred years. When the first Europeans arrived in the 1500s, large numbers of the Maya were still living in Mexico and Central America.

Timeline of the Mayan Civilization



EXERCISE 1

TO THE STUDENT:

Look at the map on the first page of the worksheet and then answer the questions below.

. What is the title of this map?______________________________

. What does the symbol ■ represent?______________________________

. What does the symbol ▒ mean?______________________________

. Which city was furthest south in the Early Mayan Empire?

____

. Which city was furthest east in the Latest Mayan Empire?

____

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Look at the timeline and answer the questions below.

- What does B.C. mean? ____________________
- What does A.D. mean? ____________________
- What is the earliest date at which we know of the Maya in Central America? ____________________
- When did the Old Empire of the Maya begin? ____________________
- When did the New Empire of the Maya end? ____________________

EXERCISE 3

TO THE STUDENT:

Match the causes on the left with their effects on the right.

CAUSES	EFFECTS
___1. Archaeologists studied Mayan writings and artifacts.	A. Mayan farmers spent part of the year building great cities.
___2. The Maya did not need to farm all year round.	B. Sometime after A.D. 800 the Old Empire fell when the Maya abandoned their cities.
___3. Diseases may have struck the Maya, or their soil may have become less fertile.	C. We learned that the Maya were a very advanced civilization.

A Mayan Legend

The Mayan did not have an alphabet like ours. Their symbols stood for ideas or syllables. Until recently people could not read most Mayan writing, and we had to learn about the Maya from the European conquerors. The following Mayan legend was written down in Spanish by a Mayan priest after the Europeans came.

THE MAYAN LEGEND OF THE CREATOR GODS

In the beginning, the creator gods lived in the ocean. They were hidden beneath green and blue feathers. One day they decided to create Earth. "Earth!" they said. And the mountains and fields arose from the sea. Then the gods made the birds, the deer, and the other animals. They told the birds and animals to live in peace by the rivers.

The creator gods wanted birds and animals to praise them, but the poor creatures could only chirp, hiss, or growl. This made the gods angry. They forced the birds and animals to hide in the forests. "From now on," said the gods, "you will be hunted and eaten by other beings."

Then the gods made men and women. They made them out of mud. But when it rained, the mud people fell apart. Then the gods made people out of wood. But they were stiff and ugly. They had no expressions on their faces. They had no souls. They did not even remember to praise the gods who had made them.

Again the gods became angry. They caused a great flood to destroy the wooden people. The houses fell upon the people, and the animals chased them into the woods. Even the cooking pots rose up against the wooden people. The pots wanted to get even for the many times they had been burned over hot fires. Only a few wooden men and women survived the floods. Their descendants are the monkeys that live in the trees.

Then the creator gods made a thick dough out of white and yellow corn. They formed new men and women from this dough. These people had expressions on their faces. They could speak; they had souls. They did not forget to praise and obey the gods.

These people knew all there was to know. They could see great distances. The gods thought that this was not good, so they blew fog into the people's eyes. From that day on, men and women have only been able to see things that are nearby.

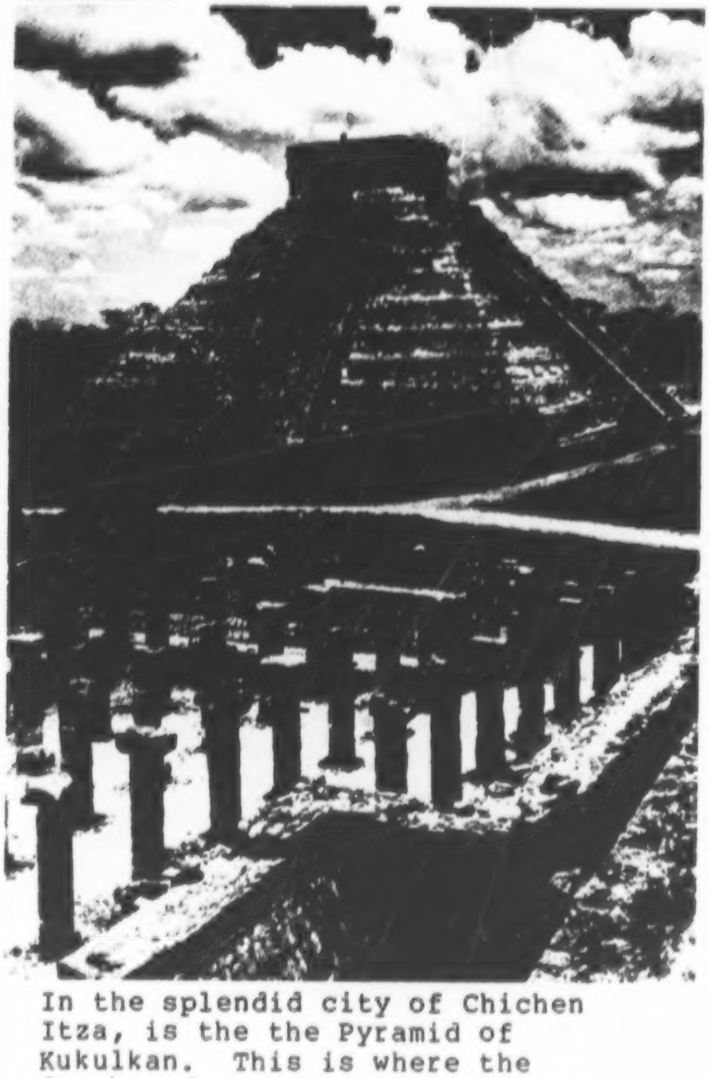
Adapted from the Educational Research Council of America, Social Science Division, *The Human Adventure: New World and Eurasian Cultures* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1975), pp. 16-17. Permission pending.

An Archaeological Dig

TO THE STUDENT:

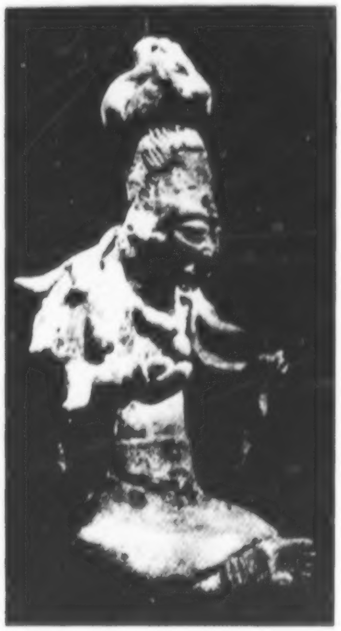
Imagine that you are an archaeologist searching for answers to the mysteries of the ancient Maya. You have dug out, or excavated, a site in Central America and found the items pictured below. Make a list of "educated guesses" about what life was like for the ancient Maya based on the artifacts you have found. Write your guesses in the chart at the end of the worksheet.

Artifact 1



In the splendid city of Chichen Itza, is the the Pyramid of Kukulkan. This is where the feathered serpent god, known as Quetzalcoatl, was worshipped.

Artifact 2

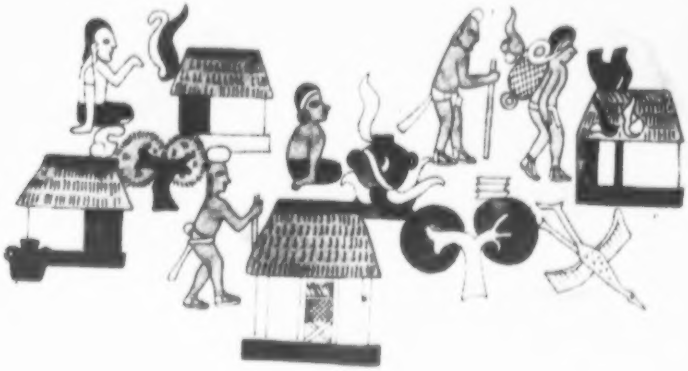


Priest offering a sacrifice to the gods.

Artifact 3

Two pages from the Dresden Codex. This is one of the three surviving Mayan books. The Codex told mostly about the rotation of the planet Venus.

Artifact 4

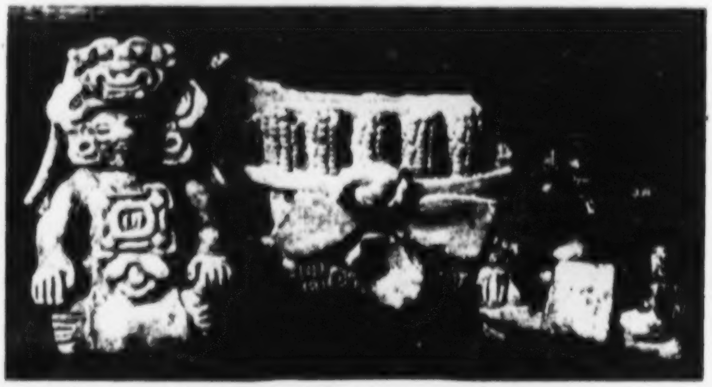


A Mayan village scene.

Artifact 5

The sun god, dating from about A.D. 700.

Artifact 6



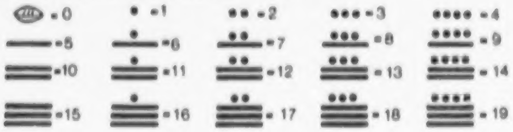
The sculpture in the middle shows ears of maize (corn). The statue was probably worn as a headdress.

Artifact 7

THE MAYAN NUMBER SYSTEM

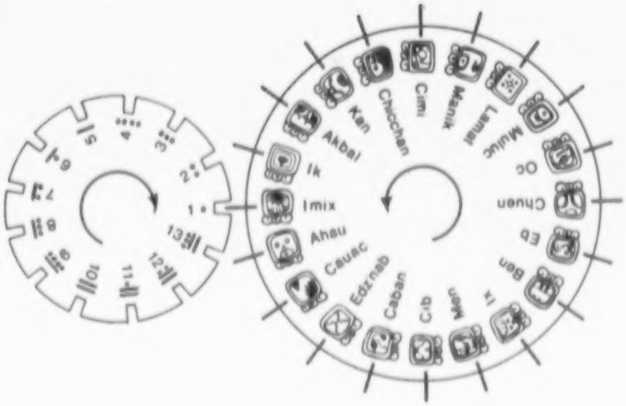
The Maya used only three signs: the dot, ● (1), the bar, ▬ (5), and the shell, (0).

The first nineteen numerals were written as follows:


= 0
= 1
= 2
= 3
= 4
= 5
= 6
= 7
= 8
= 9
= 10
= 11
= 12
= 13
= 14
= 15
= 16
= 17
= 18
= 19

The Mayan number system.

Artifact 8

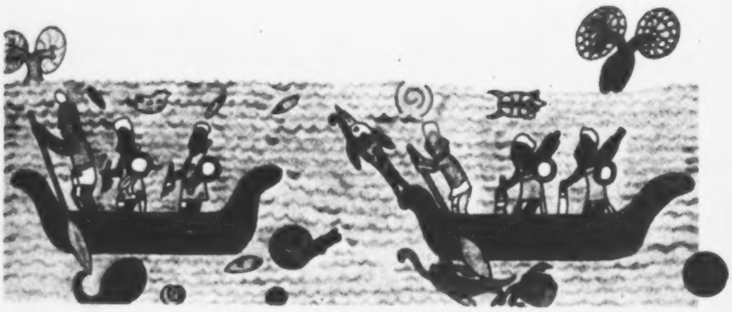

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
Imix
Ik
Akbal
Kan
Chicchan
Cimi
Manik
Lamat
Muluc
Oc
Chuen
Eb
Ben
Ix
Men
Cib
Caban
Edznab
Cauac
Ahau

A Mayan calendar: the 20 months of the circle on the right mesh with the 13 days of each month, shown by the circle on the left. This makes a total of 260 days in the Mayan year.

This is a statue of a Mayan warrior. Until recently people thought the Mayan were very peaceful. Today we know they often made war on nearby cities.

Artifact 9

Artifact 10



Part of a wall painting in the Temple of the Warriors in the city of Chichen Itza. The Mayan were skillful fishermen. Merchants also used canoes to carry goods.

Illustrations from: Whitlock, Ralph. *The Everyday Life of the Maya* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), pp. 19, 38, 40, 83, 88, 108, 110, 112, 122, 144. Photo credits: 1. J. Allan Nash; 2. Ferdinand Anton; 3. G. P. Putnam's Sons; 4. G. P. Putnam's Sons; 5. Ferdinand Anton; 6. Camera Press; 7. G. P. Putnam's Sons; 8. G. P. Putnam's Sons; 9. Ferdinand Anton; 10. G. P. Putnam's Sons. Permission pending.

EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT:

Write your "educated guesses" about Mayan life in the chart below. Base your guesses on the artifacts you have been examining.

ASPECT OF MAYAN LIFE	YOUR EDUCATED GUESSES
1. Making a living	
2. Architecture	
3. Religion	
4. Art	
5. Science and Mathematics	
6. Relations with other peoples	

STRATEGY 2

Topic: Why were the Spaniards able to conquer the Mayans?

In the early 1500s, King Charles of Spain decided to send groups of explorers to the New World, which had just been "discovered" by Christopher Columbus. These explorers hoped to win land and subjects for the Crown of Spain; souls for the Roman Catholic Church; and gold, silver, jewels, and serfs for themselves. To accomplish these goals, the explorers believed they had to conquer the Indian empires. Thus, they were called conquistadores, the Spanish word for "conqueror." The man who took Central America for Spain by subduing the Maya was Pedro de Alvarado.

Concepts

- Change

Understandings

- In the course of time, great civilizations have flourished and declined.
- Historical events have multiple causes and effects.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the Spanish conquest of Central America.
- Explain the Mayan defeat.
- Evaluate Pedro De Alvarado's role in the history of Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify both Spanish and Mayan points of view with regard to the conquest of Central America. (identifying points of view)

Springboard to the Activity

- Tell students that before Europeans came to the land which became the United States, Indian tribes lived there. Ask the class:

  - How did the weapons used by the Indians compare with those used by the settlers?

  - Could the Indians have held back the Europeans who came to settle in America?

- Tell the class that today they will read about how and why the original inhabitants of Central America, the Maya, lost their land to the Spanish settlers.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet B-2, "The Spanish Conquest." Have students read, complete the exercise, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What does this account tell about the Spanish takeover of Central America?
  - Who was Pedro de Alvarado?
  - Could the Maya have defeated Alvarado and his troops? Explain.
  - As a Mayan soldier faced with Alvarado and his troops, how would you have felt? Explain.
  - What do you suppose made Alvarado want to conquer Guatemala and El Salvador? Explain.
  - What character qualities did conquistadors like Alvarado need to possess?
  - As a Central American today, what would you think of the Spanish conquistadors? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have two students take the roles of Pedro de Alvarado and Tecun Uman. Tell the rest of the class they are reporters for Newspeople Magazine sent to interview the two men. Have them prepare questions to be addressed to each man.

The Spanish Conquest

Newspeople Magazine

Don Pedro de Alvarado—Conquistador of Central America

Don Pedro de Alvarado

Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: Lippincott & Co., 1965), p. 42. Photo credit: "El Imparcial," Guatemala City, Guatemala. Permission pending.

Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: Lippincott & Co., 1965), p. 41. Photo credit: Guatemala Tourist Bureau.

Tecun Uman

In 1519, the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes overthrew the empire of the Aztecs in Mexico. Not satisfied with his huge domain, he sent out lieutenants to bring more land under the rule of New Spain.

One of his assistants was Pedro de Alvarado. This officer began the conquest of what is now Guatemala. One moment in a rage and the next laughing as if all were well, he was a leader to be feared. Alvarado fought everywhere and all the time. He captured women to serve him and his soldiers. He killed children. He burned houses and destroyed crops. He would make promises of peace and break his pledge whenever it suited him. His word meant nothing.

The Maya thought Alvarado was crazy, but they realized they had no choice left but to rally for battle. It must be noted that long before Alvarado arrived in Guatemala with his troops, European diseases, especially smallpox, had killed much of the native population of Central America. The Aztec's conquest had also had serious economic effects on their southern neighbors. But even though the Maya had been weakened, led by Prince Tecun Uman, they boldly went to fight Alvarado and his men.

The Maya were equipped with bows and arrows, and with fighting sticks and shields. They faced Spanish soldiers with guns and iron-tipped pikes, dressed in armor and mounted on horses.

The Maya had never seen anything like the Spanish soldiers. The Spanish weapons surprised and frightened them. It seemed to them the Spaniards were hurling bolts of lightening. More frightening yet, they had never before seen horses. They believed at first that the horses and their riders together were a strange and evil type of giant.

Alvarado and his soldiers used these fears in addition to their weapons. Even though they were outnumbered a dozen times over, they fought competently and confidently.

When Prince Tecun Uman saw that the fight was going against his people, he asked Pedro de Alvarado for a man-to-man fight between leaders. Alvarado gave it to him.

The battle, unequal from the start, was brief. The Mayan prince was on foot. His body was bare. He had no helmet. He carried only his stone-tipped lance and a small round shield. Alvarado, seated on a horse, was dressed in full armor, armed with a long iron pike. Within seconds Alvarado had killed the Mayan prince with his pike. With Tecun Uman's death, the Maya surrendered. The Spaniards took Guatemala.

Pedro de Alvarado turned from Guatemala to the conquest of El Salvador, completed by 1528. He next established a strong government in Guatemala at the village now called Ciudad Vieja (Old City). In time most of Central America was ruled from there.

Adapted from May, Charles Paul, *Central America: Lands Seeking Unity* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1966), pp. 45-47.

EXERCISE

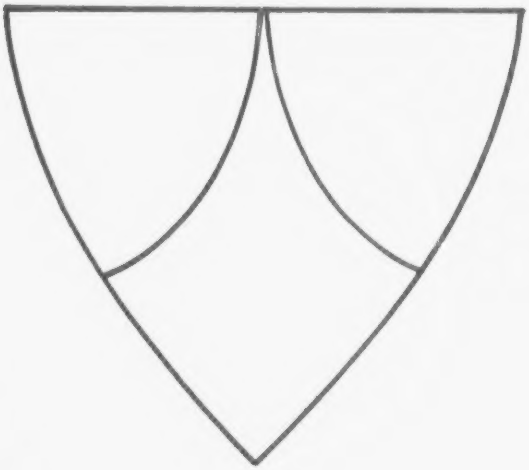
TO THE STUDENT:

In olden times, a European person who was a leader sometimes had a coat of arms. This was a shield with pictures that stood for the things which were important to the leader. It was something like a personal flag.

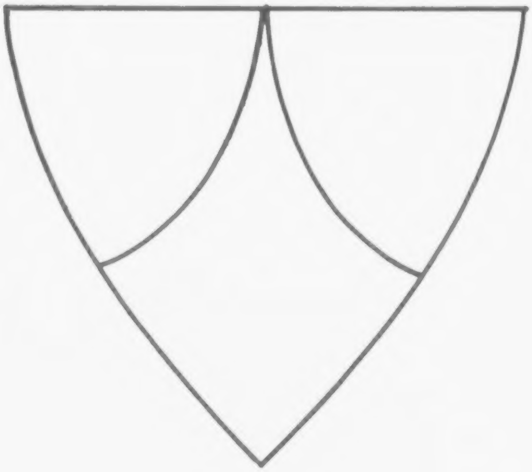
First pretend you are Pedro de Alvarado and design a coat of arms for yourself. In each space on the left draw a picture of what you think Pedro de Alvarado would have considered important in his life.

Now pretend you are Tecun Uman. Design a coat of arms for him. In each space on the right draw a picture of what you think Tecun Uman would have considered important in his life.

PEDRO DE ALVARADO'S COAT OF ARMS



TECUN UMAN'S COAT OF ARMS



STRATEGY 3

TOPIC: How was the hacienda system in Central America similar to the plantation system in the United States?

The Spanish developed a number of settlements in Central America. Most of these settlements were in the highlands where the climate was pleasant and the soil was fertile. In addition, there were large numbers of Indians in the highlands who, after their land had been taken, would be forced to work for the Spaniards.

The large estates on which the Indians were forced to work were called haciendas. The Crown granted these lands, along with Indian workers, to reward leaders of great expeditions or friends of the king.

Concepts

- Culture
- Interdependence

Understandings

- The culture in which a person lives influences the opportunities for personal growth and development.
- The history of people, nations, places, and events is interdependent.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the hacienda system.
- Explain the interdependent relationship between estate owners and Indians established by the hacienda system.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a diagram of the Spanish hacienda. (interpreting a diagram)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage the class in a discussion of slavery in the United States. Ask students:

  - When did slavery exist in our country?

  - Why were Africans taken as slaves and brought to America?

  - What was the plantation system like in the American South?

- Tell students that a system, similar to that of the plantation, existed in Central America as well as in other parts of Latin America under the Spanish. This system is called the hacienda system.

Developement

- Distribute Worksheet B-3, "The Hacienda System." Have students complete the exercise and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What was the Spanish hacienda system?
  - How was the hacienda like a village?
  - What relationship did this system set up between estate owners and Indians?
  - Judging from the diagram, what was the position of the Catholic Church in colonial Central America? Explain.
  - As a native Indian, how would you have felt about the landholding system set up by the Spanish? Could you have changed this system? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students, working in pairs, write short dialogues that might have been spoken by individuals on a hacienda, for example:
  - -- between an Indian and the manager of the hacienda store.
  - -- between a hacienda priest and an Indian.

Enrichment Activity

- Interested students might construct dioramas of a Spanish hacienda, including the people who lived there.

The Hacienda System

TO THE STUDENT:

Large landholdings, or estates, are called haciendas in Latin America. The system began during the time when Spain controlled the region. There was not enough gold and silver for all the Spanish conquerors. Many were rewarded by the Spanish king with large grants of land instead. Along with their estates, the Spaniards received Indian workers. The Indians were not paid with money. When they bought goods at the hacienda store, they had to work off their debt. Eventually the Indians became tied to the Spaniards' haciendas. Indians who lost or were driven off their own farms had no choice but to work on the haciendas. Life for these Indians was filled with hard work and misery. Below is a diagram of a Spanish hacienda.

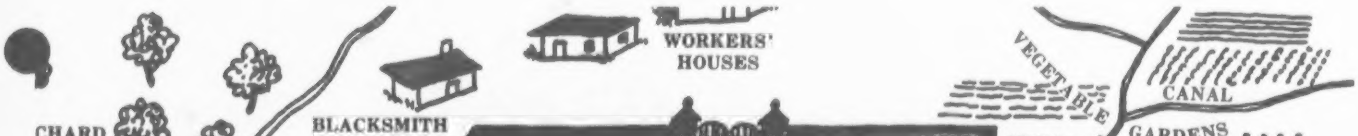

CHARD
BLACKSMITH SHOP
WORKERS' HOUSES
VEGETABLE
CANAL
GARDENS
SPINNING HOUSE
STABLES
CANAL
LANDOWNER'S MANSION
WEAVING HOUSE
WELL
POTTERY HOUSE
GRIST MILL
SUGAR MILL
PATIO
PRIESTS' HOUSE
CARPENTER SHOP
A SPANISH HACIENDA

Illustration from: Cutright, Prudence, and Durand, Loyal, *American Neighbors* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 207. Permission pending.

TO THE STUDENT:

Look at the diagram of the Spanish hacienda and answer the questions below.

1. What different kinds of work were done on a hacienda such as this one?______________________________

2. Where did the hacienda owner live?____________________

3. Who lived next to the landowner?____________________

4. What was the patio?____________________________

5. Why was there a canal leading from the well to the gardens?

6. Where did the Indian workers live?____________________

7. What does this diagram show about the relationship between the landowner, the priest, and the Indians?________________

STRATEGY 4

Topic: Could the five Central American provinces in the 1830s have remained joined?

By the beginning of the 19th century, the Creoles of Central America, as the native-born colonists were called, were sick of Spain and its exploitation of the colonies for its own benefit. When they learned about the Mexicans' successful fight for independence, the Central American Creoles too wanted to break free of Spain.

On September 15, 1821, a group of Creole leaders met in Guatemala City and issued a declaration of independence. As a result, Central America, with the exceptions of Belize, a British colony, and Panama, part of a separate Spanish viceroyalty, became free of Spanish rule. Soon Panama also broke away from Spain, but it became part of Great Colombia.

In 1823, the provinces of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica joined together to form a single country called the United Provinces of Central America, or the Central American Federation. The forces which bound the provinces together in the federation, however, were outweighed by the forces which weakened it. By 1841, all the provinces in the federation had left it to become separate independent nations.

Concepts

- Nation-state
- Change

Understandings

- Change is a constant in history.
- Among the factors that contribute to nationalism are geography, ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and common historical experience.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain and evaluate the collapse of the Central American Federation by 1841.

Skills Objectives: Student will be able to:

- Follow democratic procedures in helping to make group decisions. (following democratic procedures)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of the American Civil War. Ask the class:
  - What happened in this country when the Southern states decided to leave the Union?

- Why did the Southern states want to break away from the United States of America?

- What was the outcome of the Civil War? Were the states allowed to break away?

Word Warm-up:

. Review the meanings of these words: province, federation, isthmus.

Development

. Divide the class into groups of five. Within each group, assign students the roles of congressional representatives of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

. Distribute Worksheet B-4, "The Central American Federation."

. Have students, in their roles, read the worksheet, complete the exercise, and then discuss the pros and cons of federation. Finally, have them vote on whether or not to allow provinces to leave the federation.

. Have each "Federation Congress" report the result of its vote.

. Tell students that the congress of the federation did, in fact, vote to allow provinces to leave. By 1841, all had done so.

. Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - After winning independence, why do you suppose the leaders of Central America decided to join together and form a federation type of government?

  - In what way was the Central American Federation like the government of the United States? Explain.

  - Why did the Central American Federation collapse?

  - Should the provinces have left the federation and become separate nations? In the early 1800s, could they have remained united? Explain.

  - Political, social, and economic unrest characterize the nations of Central America today. Should these nations today form one country? Explain.

Summary/Application

. Have students, again in their roles as representatives at the Central American Federation Congress, write letters back to their constituents, explaining their own opinion about the vote to allow provinces to leave the federation.

The Central American Federation

TO THE STUDENT:

Soon after they became independent of Spain, the provinces of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica joined together to form a single country called the Central American Federation. A constitution, much like that of the United States, was adopted. Each province in the federation had its own governor and lawmaking body. The country as a whole was governed by a president and a congress.

Pretend that the year is now 1838, and many problems face the new nation. You are representatives to the congress of the Central American Federation. Your task is to decide whether or not to allow provinces to leave the federation if they wish to do so.

In the list below are six facts about the federation. Three describe factors that tend to weaken the federation. Three describe factors that tend to strengthen the federation. On the line in front of each factor write a W if you think the factor weakens the federation. Write an S if you think the factor strengthens the federation.

FACTORS WEAKENING THE FEDERATION AND FACTORS FAVORING THE FEDERATION

_____ 1. The provinces would be economically stronger as one large country than five small, separate countries.

_____ 2. The provinces would be militarily stronger as one large country than as five separate countries. The provinces are located in a vital area of the globe--on an isthmus separating the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Other nations might want to take control of the isthmus or part of it.

_____ 3. Before winning independence, the provinces had little contact with one another. Trade had been routed directly to Spain. Rugged mountains and forests separated the main cities and farming areas from each other. Transportation and communications are poor. People of the different provinces have had little chance to get to know one another and, therefore, do not trust each other.

_____ 4. The provinces share a common history (under the Spanish), language (Spanish), and religion (Roman Catholic).

_____ 5. Ethnic differences exist in the provinces. For example, most of the people of Guatemala are Indians. Most of the people of Costa Rica are of European descent.

_____ 6. A bitter conflict is raging between two Central American groups. One group is made up of landowners, merchants, and high officials in the Catholic Church. These people want to be as powerful as they were when Spain ruled. They think this will happen if each province becomes a separate nation.

The other group includes professionals, owners of small businesses, and farmers. They want to have more power and to reduce the power of the rich landowners and the Catholic Church. They feel that their goals can best be achieved in the federation.

STRATEGY 5

Topic: Since independence, who has held power in Central America?

Life in Central America during the first century of independence did not change very much for the indigenous people (the Indians), or for the Ladino (Spanish/Indian) campesinos--their masters were now "Guatemalan" rather than "Spanish." In the late 19th century when nations like Guatemala attempted to modernize by developing coffee as an export crop, large tracts of the best farmland, especially on the Pacific coast, were seized from Indians and Ladinos, many of whom were forced to work on the coffee plantations for horrendously low pay.

In Guatemala this process has recently accelerated. The discovery of minerals, especially oil and nickel, the development of large-scale cattle ranching, and the opening up of the northern jungles have led to more and more seizures of lands by the generals and wealthy elite who rule the country.

Concepts

- Citizenship
- Power

Understandings

- Governmental structures vary from place to place.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain how political and economic power has been exercised in Central America since independence.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a cartoon depicting the distribution of political and economic power that developed in post-independence Central America. (interpreting a cartoon)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask the class:
  - What political rights do we have as American citizens?
  - What economic rights do we have as American citizens?
  - How would you describe the way political and economic power is held in the United States? Does one small group have all the power? Or do many citizens share the power?
- Tell students that today they will examine a cartoon that shows how power has been held in many Central American countries since independence.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet B-5, "Power in Central American Nations." Have students read, examine the cartoon, and complete the exercise. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story does the cartoon tell about power after independence in many Central American nations?
  - According to the cartoon, how have the native populations of Central American nations been treated since independence?
  - What has life been like for the wealthy landowners and others in power?
  - Is the picture here true of the situation in Central America today? What information do you need to answer this question?

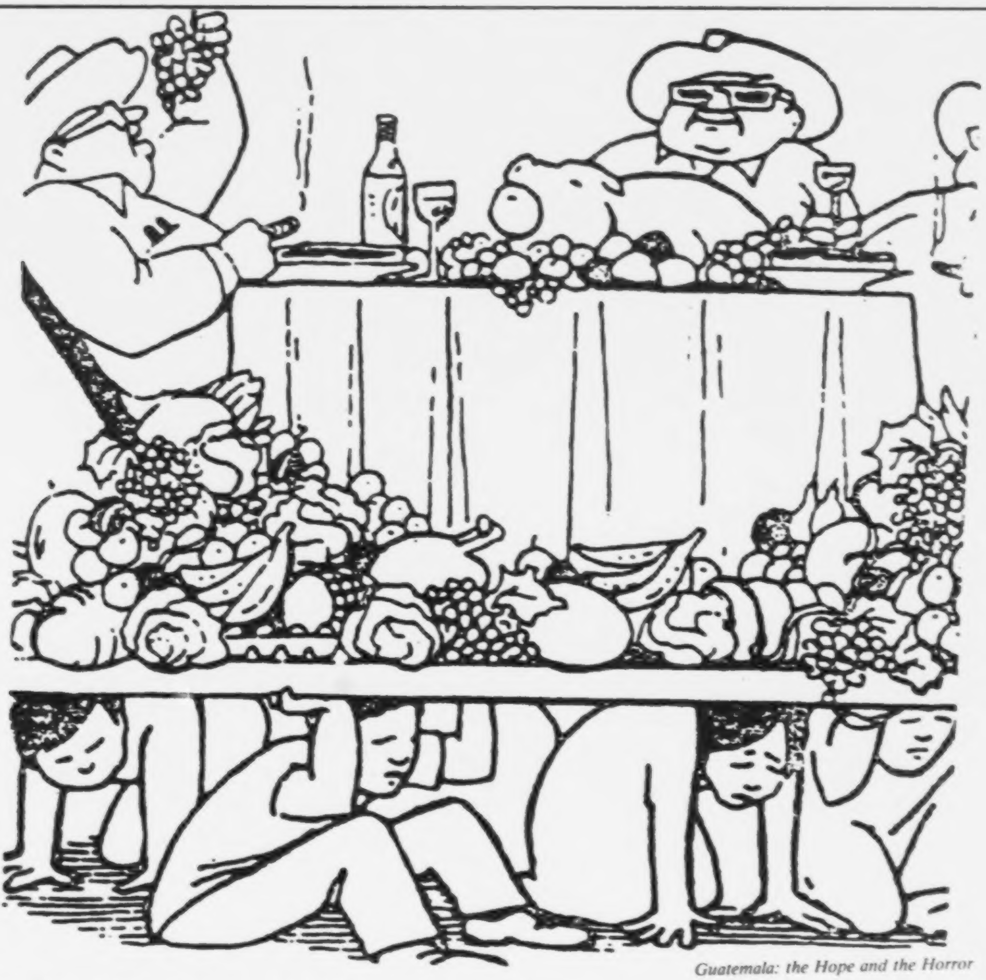
Summary/Application

- Have students draw "balloons" coming from characters in the cartoon and then have them write inside what they think the people in the cartoon might be saying.

Power in Central American Nations

TO THE STUDENT:

The cartoon below shows how power (in government as well as in the economy) was held in many Central American countries after independence was won. Study the cartoon and answer the questions which follow.



Guatemala: the Hope and the Horror

. What is happening in the cartoon?______________________

____

. Who are the people sitting at the table?______________

. Why do the people carrying the food look so sad?________

. What is the cartoonist trying to say in this cartoon?________

____

STRATEGY 6

Topic: Should the United States have involved itself in Central America throughout the 19th and 20th centuries?

The United States has been interested and involved in the nations of Central America since they achieved independence. Often the relationship between Central America and its big neighbor to the north has not been happy.

Concepts

- Nation-state
- Interdependence

Understandings

- There are critical decisions facing all governments as members of a global world.
- Events in one nation often have repercussions in other nations.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the interest of the United States in the nations of Central America.
- Describe the involvement of the United States in Central America over time.
- Evaluate the role of the United States in Central America over time.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Categorize United States actions in Central America. (categorizing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask the class:
  - How many of you have heard or seen on radio or television or have read in the newspaper about U.S. involvement in Central America--in countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras?
  - How is the United States involved in those nations?
- Tell students that United States involvement in the affairs of Central America is not a new development. Today they will examine a number of both friendly and unfriendly U.S. actions toward Central America.

Developement

- Distribute Worksheet B-6, "Central America and the United States." Have students, working in pairs, read and complete the exercises. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story do these headlines tell about the relationship between Central America and the United States?

- Why do you suppose the United States has been so interested in Central America over the years?

- How would you explain the fact that through the 1800s and much of the 1900s the people of Central America resented the United States?

- As a citizen of a Central American nation today how would you feel about the United States? Explain.

- Did the United States have the right to act as it did in Central America? Explain.

- Should a nation act in its own best interest even if that means interfering in the affairs of another nation? Explain.

Summary/Application

. Have students, as editors of the Central American Courier, write editorials giving their opinions about United States actions in Central America (1823-1985).

Central America and the United States

TO THE STUDENT:

Read these headlines. Then do the exercise.

Central American Courier

1823 -- UNITED STATES HAPPY ABOUT LATIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. TRADE BETWEEN U.S. AND INDEPENDENT LATIN NATIONS NOW POSSIBLE.

1823 -- U.S. PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE WARNS OUTSIDE COUNTRIES NOT TO MEDDLE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

1856 -- WILLIAM WALKER OF TENNESSEE TRIES, BUT FAILS, TO JOIN CENTRAL AMERICA AS SLAVE TERRITORY TO THE SOUTH OF THE UNITED STATES.

1899 -- UNITED STATES FRUIT COMPANIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA ARE RESENTED FOR MAKING LARGE PROFITS. THEY ARE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO CONTROL CENTRAL AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS.

1903 -- AFTER HELPING THE PROVINCE OF PANAMA REVOLT AGAINST COLOMBIA, THE U.S. AND PANAMA SIGN AN AGREEMENT. PANAMA GIVES THE U.S. THE RIGHT TO BUILD A CANAL ACROSS PANAMA.

1905 -- PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT SAYS U.S. HAS THE RIGHT TO USE A "BIG STICK" AGAINST ANY NATION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE WHOSE WRONGDOING HURTS U.S. INTERESTS.

1912 -- AFTER DISTURBANCES BREAK OUT IN NICARAGUA, U.S. PRESIDENT TAFT SENDS IN THE MARINES TO PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES AND PROPERTY.

1930 -- RESENTED THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN, U.S. PROMISES IT WILL NOW ACT AS A "GOOD NEIGHBOR."

1948 -- AMERICAN NATIONS SET UP THE OAS (ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES). MEMBERS AGREE NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS.

1961 -- PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY PROPOSES THE "ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS." MEMBERS AGREE TO $20 BILLION AID PROGRAM TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS IN LATIN AMERICA.

1977 -- PANAMA AND THE U.S. SIGN A NEW TREATY GIVING BACK OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE CANAL TO PANAMA BY THE YEAR 2000.

1984 -- U.S. GIVES MONEY AND WEAPONS TO GUERILLAS WHO FIGHT TO OVERTHROW THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA.

1984 -- U.S. GIVES MILLIONS IN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID TO THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR, WHICH FIGHTS TO DEFEAT COMMUNIST REBELS.

EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT:

Categorize the above headlines by placing in Column A three headlines that show U.S. actions friendly to Central America. In Column B place three headlines that show U.S. actions unfriendly to Central America.

A	B
U.S. ACTIONS FRIENDLY TO CENTRAL AMERICA	U.S ACTIONS UNFRIENDLY TO CENTRAL AMERICA

STRATEGY 7

Topic: How justified was the way the United States obtained rights to the Panama Canal Zone?

The history of Panama is unique in Central America. During the colonial period, Panama was part of New Granada, a Spanish colony separate from the colony formed by Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. When New Granada achieved independence, Panama became a province of the new nation, Colombia.

It was as the province of Colombia that at the turn of the century Panama became the object of United States interest. The United States was then a fast industrializing nation well on its way to becoming a world power. President Theodore Roosevelt saw that a U.S. controlled canal, built across the narrowest part of the isthmus, would help the United States achieve prominence. He was determined to do what was necessary to have that canal.

Concepts

- Interdependence
- Nation-state

Understandings

- The history of people, nations, places, and events is interdependent.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain United States interest in building the Panama Canal.
- Describe and evaluate how the United States obtained rights to the Canal Zone.
- Explain the new treaties negotiated between the United States and Panama in 1978.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Predict the consequences of possible actions the United States might have taken regarding Panama in 1903. (predicting outcomes)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask students:
  - Have you ever really wanted something that belonged to another?
  - What methods might you have used to get what you wanted?
  - If you couldn't convince the other person to agree to give it you, or to sell it to you, would you have the right to take it?
- Tell students that nations sometimes face a similar problem. Today the class will read about a time when the United States very much wanted ten square miles of land in Central America and the government refused to give it up.

Development:

- Distribute Worksheet B-7A, "The Panama Canal." Divide the class into small groups of equal size. Have each group read the background information and examine the map on the worksheet. Ask students to demonstrate, using a wall map, why the United States at the turn of the century wanted to build a canal across Central America and why Panama was a logical site. Then, in their roles as presidential advisors, have each group complete its decision chart as directed on the worksheet.

- Have each group report its advice to President Theodore Roosevelt, explaining why it chose that particular option.

- Distribute Worksheet B-7B, "Decision and Exploration." Have students read and explain their answers to the following questions:

  - How did the United States get the right to build a canal across the Isthmus of Panama?

  - What actions did President Theodore Roosevelt take to get the right to build a canal?

  - Why did the United States want to build a canal across Central America?

  - Why was Panama chosen as the site for the canal?

  - How did President Roosevelt defend what he did to get the right to build the canal?

  - As a member of the Congress of the United States, how would you have reacted to President Roosevelt's explanation of how he "started the canal"?

  - Without the approval of Congress, should President Roosevelt have acted as he did? Why or why not?

  - To get the right to build the canal, should the United States have encouraged the Panamanians to rebel against their government? Explain.

- Tell the class that in 1978, new treaties were signed between the United States and Panama, giving Panama complete control of the canal and the Canal Zone by the year 2000. Ask students:

  - Why do you suppose Panamanians wanted this new agreement?

  - Is the United States right to give the canal and the Canal Zone back to Panama? Why or why not?

Summary/Application

- Have students pretend the year is 1911 and they are American citizens who have just read President Theodore Roosevelt's explanation about what he did to "start" the building of the Panama Canal. Have students then write letters to the President expressing their feelings about his actions and explanation.

Enrichment Activity

- Interested students might research and report on one of the following topics associated with the Panama Canal.
  - -- problems which faced Americans in building the Panama Canal and how these were solved.
  - -- canal's locks and how they operate.

The Panama Canal

BACKGROUND

Until this century, Central America, besides being a bridge between the continents, was a barrier between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Ever since the Spanish conquest, people dreamt of digging a canal across a narrow part of the isthmus, but the problems had been too great.

In the 1880s, French engineers tried to build a canal across a narrow section of the Isthmus of Panama. With power shovels and other machines, workers began digging a ditch in the Panama clay. Then the rainy season began. The clay turned to mud, sliding down the sides of the ditch and burying the machinery. Also, yellow fever and other tropical diseases killed thousands of workers. After eight long years the French gave up.

PANAMA
PANAMA CANAL
0 Kilometers 20
0 Miles 12
BAY OF PANAMA

Illustration from: Cutright, Prudence, and Durand, Loyal, *American Neighbors* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 287. Permission pending.

In 1903, the government of the United States, headed by President Theodore Roosevelt, decided to build a canal across Panama. But first the United States had to get the right to build the canal. It had to pay the French company for its work on the canal. Then it had to obtain rights from Colombia, because Panama was then part of that country. Colombia, however, refused.

President Roosevelt still very much wanted to build a canal across Panama. Such a passage would shorten the sea route for American ships sailing from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. United States trade would benefit. Also, in time of war, a U.S. controlled canal across Panama would be very valuable.

* * *

TO THE STUDENT:

You are members of President Roosevelt's cabinet. It is your job to advise the President about building a canal across Panama. Read each of the possible actions the U.S. might take. Next to each, describe what would probably happen if that action were taken. Then try to agree on which action the President should take.

DECISION: HOW CAN THE U.S. GET THE RIGHT TO BUILD A CANAL ACROSS PANAMA?

POSSIBLE ACTIONS	WHAT WOULD PROBABLY HAPPEN....
1. Continue peacefully trying to convince Colombia to agree to a canal owned by the United States.	
2. Accept Colombia's refusal of permission to build a canal across Panama. Find another place to build.	
3. Refuse to trade with Colombia until Colombia agrees to let the U.S. build the canal.	
4. Encourge the people of Panama to rebel against Colombia. Help them become independent in return for their agreement to allow the U.S. to build and operate a canal across their country.	
5. Other possible action:	

Decision and Explanation

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S DECISION

President Theodore Roosevelt decided to encourage the people of Panama to declare their independence from Colombia. He sent United States battleships into the waters around Panama.

The new nation of Panama then gave the United States all authority within a strip of land 10 miles wide across the isthmus. This strip was called the Canal Zone. It was rented to the United States "in perpetuity," which means forever. In return, the United States promised to protect Panama's independence, paid $10 million, and also agreed to pay yearly rent.

ROOSEVELT'S EXPLANATION

Nine years after President Roosevelt got the right to build the Panama Canal, he spoke about what he did to "start it."

> I am interested in the Panama Canal because I started it. If I had followed usual methods, I would have sent a State paper of probably 200 pages to Congress. The debates on it would have been going on yet. But I took the Canal Zone and let Congress debate; and while the debate goes on, the Canal does also.

Text adapted from *The New York Times*, March 25, 1911. Permission pending.

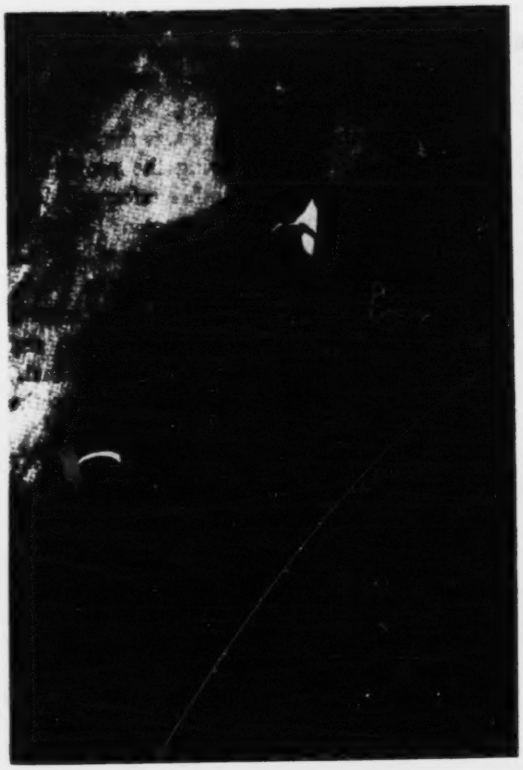


Photo from: Linden, Glenn M., et al., *Legacy of Freedom Volume 2: United States History from Reconstruction to the Present* (River Forest, IL, Laidlaw Brothers, 1986), p. 162. Photo credit: The White House Historical Association. Permission pending.

STRATEGY B 8

Topic: Why have the Sandinistas come to power in Nicaragua?

Since achieving independence from Spain in 1821, Central America has been subject to bursts of political instability and to periodic revolutions. This trend has continued through the 1980s, and today Central America is still a region in turmoil. After decades of rule by right-wing dictatorships, leftist insurgencies in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras grew. In Nicaragua, after a bloody two-year civil war, the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista National Liberation Front ousted the dictator General Anastasia Somoza Dabayle and took control of the government. Upon their victory, the Sandinista government declared all land owned by Somoza and the farms of individuals who fled the country "property of the people." Much of this land has been distributed to previously landless peasants. And while many people are enthusiastic about the Sandinista government, one group called the Contras have accused the Sandinistas of suppressing democracy in Nicaragua. The Contras are struggling against the Sandinistas to achieve power.

Concepts

- Change
- Nation-state

Understandings

- Change is constant.
- Governmental structures vary from place to place.
- Governmental structure in a place may vary from time to time.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the hardships suffered by peasants in Nicaragua under the Somoza government.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Make inferences from a poem about the lives of peasants under the Somoza government. (making inferences)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students imagine that they are American farmers who own their own land. Engage them in a discussion of what their day might be like, the kinds of crops they might raise, how they make money, what they might need to buy (tools, trucks, seed, fertilizer, etc.), how much free time they might have.

- Now tell them that the farm does not belong to them. You, the teacher, are the landlord; you live in the city and they are farmworkers. Tell them you are not satisfied with their work. You are lowering their pay, but if they want to maintain their present salary, they can work weekends. You are also increasing their rent, and though they have told you their houses need repair, you are not willing to pay for the repairs. You want as much profit as you can possibly get. Tell them not to bother asking the government for help because the government is on your (the landlord's) side.

- Elicit students' reactions to this scenario by asking "What would you do?" (Possible responses: They would quit and move away; they would in some way get rid of the landlord; they would get together and fight the landlord and the government.)

- Tell students that today they will examine a similar situation which occurred in one Central American nation--Nicaragua--in 1979.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet B-8A, "The Story of Amada Pineda." Tell students that this is the story of a Nicaraguan peasant woman, written in 1981. Read the story to the class as students follow along. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What does Amada Pineda tell us about events in Nicaragua in 1979?

  - What does she say life was like for Nicaraguan peasants at that time?

  - Why did the peasants begin to organize against their landlords? Explain.

  - How did the landlords respond to the peasants' demands?

  - How does her description of Nicaragua in 1979 compare with our discussion/role-play the class engaged in at the beginning of this lesson?

  - As a Nicaraguan peasant, would you have joined the peasants' army to fight against the National Guard and the landlords? Explain.

- Distribute Worksheet B-8B, "A Poet's View." Read the poem aloud to the class as students follow along. Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What is Daisy Zamora saying in this poem?

  - How do the ideas and feelings expressed in this poem compare to the ideas and feelings expressed in the story of Amada Pineda?

  - What does the poet mean when she says that future generations of Nicaraguan children will wake one day "...knowing the land was conquered once more, for them"? When had the land been previously conquered?

  - What is the poet referring to when she says that "Now we plow dry fields/ Each furrow wet with blood"? Explain.

  - Do the story and poem give you a fair picture of life for peasants in Nicaragua in 1979? Explain. What other information would help you?

Summary/Application

- Students might draw pictures to illustrate events described in the story of Amada Pineda or verses in Daisy Zamora's poem.

The Story of Amada Pineda

TO THE STUDENT:

"Amada Pineda" is a true story of a Nicaraguan peasant woman. In this story Amada describes how she and other peasants joined a movement in 1979 led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front to overthrow the landlords and the Nicaraguan government.

My life as a mother and peasant isn't easy. I get up at two in the morning to slap out the day's tortillas. After that I prepare the day's food for my children. I have to leave them before the sun rises so I can work in the fields with my husband. We plant corn and beans.

My husband and I had no farmland of our own. We used to work for a big landowner. Our salary was 25 cents a day for working 18 hours. The conditions were so bad that many of the peasants began to fight for improvements. We wanted a dollar a day instead of 25 cents. We also needed outhouses in the fields, medicine for when we got sick on the job, and a little plot of land so we could grow food for our families.

All over Nicaragua, more and more peasants, like ourselves, began to organize for decent wages and better working conditions. But the landlords would not give us anything more. Instead, they called in the army, the National Guard, to stop us from having meetings to organize our struggle.

A friend of ours, another peasant, named Bernardino, was killed by the National Guard. They tortured him badly because the soldiers wanted the names of other workers who had joined the struggle.

My husband and I were active in this fight, too. The National Guard started to look for my husband and he had to go into the mountains to hide. Sometimes he would sneak back home late at night, just to see the children. Then he would go back to the mountains. Many peasants were taken away by the soldiers and never seen again.

When I was arrested it didn't come as a surprise. The first thing I saw was a line of soldiers all around my house ready to shoot their guns. I came out carrying my three-year-old daughter and my baby, who was just 15 months old. I handed over the children to a neighbor and the soldiers started to beat me. They wanted to know the names of the other workers fighting against the landowners. They also wanted to know where the workers had hidden their guns. The soldiers took me to jail where I was treated very badly because the soldiers wanted this information. When my husband tried to save me, they caught him and tortured him, too.

We peasants tried to stop the soldiers. We formed our own army. We had only knives and machetes compared with the rifles, machine guns, and tanks of the government. Still, we did fight the National Guard and the landowners, and we won.

Adapted from Randall, Margaret, *Sandino's Daughters* (London: Zed Press, 1981), pp. 81-83.

A Poet's View

TO THE STUDENT:

The following poem was written by a well-known Nicaraguan poet, Daisy Zamora. Although Daisy was raised in a well-to-do Nicaraguan family, during her years at the university she became aware of how poor most of the people of her country were. She wrote this poem in 1967, twelve years before the people, led by the Sandinistas, rose up against their landlords and the government.

Song of Hope

by Daisy Zamora

One day the fields will stay green
And the earth black, sweet and wet.
Our children will grow tall on that earth
    and our children's children...
And they'll be free as the mountain trees
    and birds.

They'll wake each day, happy to be alive,
Knowing the land was conquered once
more, for them.

One day...

Now we plow dry fields
Each furrow wet with blood.

STRATEGY 9

Topic: Should the United States be involved today in Nicaragua?

The United States, under the Reagan administration, has been concerned about developments in Central America. Determined to stop the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere, the United States government, which has long had economic and political interests in Central America, finds itself in Nicaragua aiding the counter-revolutionaries opposed to the Sandinista government.

Concepts

- Interdependence

Understandings

- Present and future political decision-making increasingly involves considerations of global interdependence.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain events that led to the Sandinistas' rise to power in Nicaragua.
- Evaluate current United States involvement in Nicaragua.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast arguments used by those who today support and oppose the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. (comparing and contrasting)
- Compare and contrast the reasons cited by President Reagan for U.S. involvement in Central America with the reasons cited by those who oppose U.S. intervention. (comparing and contrasting)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students imagine that their neighbors are engaged in a family dispute. The dispute has been going on for a long time. Ask:
  - Under what circumstances would it be right for you to get involved in this dispute? If certain members of the family asked you to get involved, would that make it right? Explain.
  - How do you think these neighbors would react to your getting involved in their affairs? Explain.
- Tell students that today they will examine a serious dispute, actually a war, in Nicaragua that the United States has become involved in.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet B-9A, "Revolution in Nicaragua." Have students read, complete the exercise, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story is told here about the revolution in Nicaragua?

  - Before 1979, how was Nicaragua ruled?

  - Who are the Sandinistas? How did they come to power in Nicaragua?

  - What arguments are used by people who oppose Nicaragua's Sandinista government? Explain.

  - What arguments are used by people who support the Sandinistas?

  - If you were a Nicaraguan peasant, a businessman, a large landowner, would you support the Sandinistas? Do you have enough facts here on which to base an opinion? What kinds of sources could you go to for more information? Explain.

- Distribute Worksheet B-9B, "United States Policy in Central America." Have students read each "article," examine the chart, and complete the exercises. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What do these sources tell us about U.S. policy toward Central America?

  - What reasons does the President give for United States interest in Central America?

  - What arguments against United States involvement in Central America are given by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the other writers?

  - Is the United States threatened by the spread of communism in Central America?

  - Does the United States have a responsibility to help its neighbors if, as President Reagan suggests, they are threatened by communist nations?

  - Is U.S. military involvement in Nicaragua, as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the other writers suggest, "reasonless," an attempt to "turn back the clock," "inhuman," and "false"?

  - Under what circumstances should the United States help another nation militarily? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Students might make a scrapbook, using newspaper and magazine clippings, of recent political events in one Central American nation.

- The question of United States involvement in Central America could engender a lively class debate.

Revolution in Nicaragua

TO THE STUDENT:

Jaime Barretto is an eleven-year-old boy from Nicaragua. Below is a letter he wrote to his friend in Chicago.

Dear David,

I would like to tell you about my country and its problems.

Until 1979, the Somoza family had ruled Nicaragua for forty years. They were dictators. This means that they had all the power. People could not speak against them. The Somozas were greedy, dishonest, and brutal. Under their rule the people of Nicaragua became poorer while the Somozas grew richer.

In the 1970s, business people, students, peasants, laborers, and Christian clergy, calling themselves "Sandinistas," joined together to fight the Somoza government. After years of fighting, Somoza was forced to flee the country and the new government began to make changes. For example, the Sandinistas gave the land that once belonged to the Somozas and other rich families to the peasants to farm.

In Nicaragua, a group called the Contras is fighting the Sandinistas. They say that the Sandinistas are communists who have driven out of the country all groups who wanted Nicaragua to become a democracy. They also say that freedom of speech and press are severely limited.

But many people in my country support the Sandinistas. They point to the improvements that have been made and say that the Sandinistas would do more if they did not need to fight the Contras. They say that because the U.S. supports the Contras America is to blame for the fighting in Nicaragua. They claim that people are allowed to criticize the government and that newspapers are published with varying opinions. And they point out that it is not unusual for some freedoms to be temporarily suspended when a government is under attack as is the Sandinista government by the Contras.

Thank you for giving me a chance to tell you about my country. I hope you can visit us, to see for yourself.

Signed,

Jaime Barretto
Managua, Nicaragua

U.S. Policy in Central America

TO THE STUDENT:

David Cohen is an eleven-year-old boy from Chicago. He has written a reply to the letter his friend, Jaime Barretto, sent him from Nicaragua.

Dear Jaime,

Thank you for your letter. I wish we could talk together.

People in the United States have different opinions about United States involvement in Nicaragua. Many people think we should not be involved at all. But President Reagan's administration supports the Contras and has supplied them with $100 million in aid. The administration also encourages private individuals to help the Contras.

The administration believes the Sandinistas are not allowing the Nicaraguan people their freedom. They are also afraid that if they do not fight communism with U.S. aid then, country by country, all of Central America could become communist. They say if the Cubans or others give aid to help the communists in Central America, then the U.S. must give aid to fight them.

Although many people are against the U.S. giving aid to the Contras, the kind of aid we give them is also questioned. Some people say we should give economic aid only. Some say we should supply arms and military advice. And some even say we should send troops. But others say if we supply military aid we will encourage war. They point out that it is the people of Nicaragua who will suffer most from war. And they say once we start supplying military aid, it is very hard to stop. As you can imagine, these important questions are hotly debated here in America.

So, Jaime, you can see that there are many different opinions about the role of the U.S. government in Central America. I wish you could come and visit our class so we could discuss them.

Your friend,

David Cohen
Chicago, Illinois

EXERCISE 1

TO THE STUDENT:

Imagine that Jaime Barretto is coming to visit your class to tell you about his life in Nicaragua. Write two questions that you would like to ask Jaime about Nicaragua.

1. ____________________

____

2. ____________________

____

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Worksheet B-9B presents arguments for and arguments against United States military involvement in Central America. In Column A below, list three arguments for U.S. involvement. In column B, list three arguments against U.S. involvement.

United States Military Involvement in Central America

ARGUMENTS FOR	ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Subtheme C *Economic Inequality*

LEARNING ACTIVITY

RATIONALE

Great inequality between rich and poor characterizes the nations of Central America. A small percentage of the population controls most of the wealth in most of the countries, while the vast majority of people remain very poor. Their low income, and consequently low standard of living, makes life very hard for the majority of Central Americans. Social problems include high illiteracy, lack of physicians relative to the population, high infant mortality, and lack of safe water.

The great disparity between rich and poor in Central America has made the isthmus ripe for revolution. In 1979, Marxist Sandinistas ousted the right-wing government of General Anastasio Somoza Debayle and took control of Nicaragua. Leftist insurgents are threatening the governments of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In an attempt to discourage the spread of communism in Central America, the government of the United States, under the Reagan Administration, has increased both economic and military aid to the threatened nations.

STRATEGY 1

Topic: How is scarcity a problem in Central American nations?

Statistics on literacy, medical care, infant mortality, and sanitation in Central America point to the very hard lives led by most of the isthmus' people.

Concepts

- Scarcity

Understandings

- The fundamental economic problem for individuals and groups is scarcity.
- The levels of development and the standards of living of people vary widely.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain how scarcity is a fundamental problem in Central America.
- Analyze why nations of Central America are considered developing rather than developed nations.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a table showing Central American social problems. (interpreting a table)
- Formulate hypotheses concerning the causes and effects of Central American social problems. (formulating hypotheses)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a general discussion of the quality of life in the United States. Ask the class:
  - Are most Americans, when sick, able to see a doctor? Are there enough doctors to care for the sick in the U.S.A.?
  - Do most babies in the United States live to see their first birthdays? (Tell students that about 1.1% (11 out of 1000) die in their first year of life.)
  - Is safe drinking water available for most Americans?
  - Do most school-age children attend school in our country? Do most learn to read and write?

- Tell students that life in Central American nations is much harder for most people than life for most people in the United States. Today the class will examine some specific problems facing Central Americans.

Word Warm-Up

- Review the following vocabulary: social problems, literacy rate, infant mortality.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet C-1, "Social Problems." Have students examine the chart, complete the exercise, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story does this chart tell about social problems in Central America?
  - As a typical child in Guatemala, what do you think your life would be like? Explain.
  - Judging from the chart, are Central American nations developed or developing? Explain.
  - How do you think the social problems of Central American nations compare with those of the United States?
  - Why do you suppose the nations of Central America have these problems?
  - Do you think these problems hold back progress in Central America? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students pretend to be typical Guatemalan children. Based on the information given in the chart, have them write letters to imaginary pen-pals in the United States describing:
  - where they live
  - their schooling
  - their health
  - their comforts of life

Social Problems

TO THE STUDENT:

The following chart shows some of the basic social problems faced by people in Central America. Study the chart and answer the questions that follow.

The hard life in Central America

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama
Percent of school-age population in school	55	47	33	48	54	68
Literacy rate	93	65	50	60	65	85
Population per physician	1,500	3,160	2,540	3,180	2,060	1,130
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	24	53	72	90	90	34
Percent of population with safe water	81	48	42	55	46	83

Source: World Military and Social Expenditures

Chart from: "The Hard Life in Central America," *The New York Times*, January 15, 1984.

1. For which Central American nations are figures given?_______

____

2. In El Salvador, what percentage of people can read and write?_______________________________________

____

3. In Nicaragua, how many people are there for every one doctor?_______________________________________

4. In which nation does the highest percent of children attend school?__________________________________

5. Based on this chart, which Central American nation has the greatest social problems?____________________________

6. In one or two sentences, explain the information on the chart.______________________________

____

____

7. What is meant by the title, "The Hard Life in Central America"?______________________________

____

____

____

STRATEGY 2

Topic: How do standards among the rich and poor in Central America compare?

Literacy rates, infant mortality rates, and per capita income do not give a complete economic and social picture of Central American nations. Further examination reveals a great disparity between the standards of living of the rich and poor in Central America. In Guatemala, for example, a small percentage of the population controls most of the country's wealth, while the majority of the people remain very poor.

Concepts

- Scarcity
- Standard of living

Understandings

- The level of development and the standard of living of people varies widely.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain how the national income is distributed in most Central American nations.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast standards of living between the rich and the poor in Central America. (comparing and contrasting)
- Interpret a cartoon depicting the gap in Central American living standards. (interpreting a cartoon)
- Interpret pie graphs showing income distribution in Guatemala. (interpreting pie graphs)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask students:
  - Have you ever been in someone's home and said to yourself, " This family has more than my family or my family has more than this family?" What made you decide?
- Tell students that an evaluation of the way a family lives based on the goods and services it has is called "standard of living." Write on the chalkboard the following examples of the way two families live in New York City:

N.Y.C. FAMILY A	N.Y.C FAMILY B
Home computer	Typewriter
Cadillac car	Use subway or bus
Stereo	Small radio
Dishwasher	Wash dishes in kitchen sink
30" color television	10" black and white television

- Have students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - Which of these families has a higher standard of living?
  - Why do you suppose one family has a higher standard of living than the other?
  - How does family income affect standard of living? Explain.
- Write the following on the chalkboard and have students select the correct pairs:

a. increase in income
increase in standard of living

b. decrease in income
decrease in standard of living

c. increase in income
decrease in standard of living

d. decrease in income
increase in standard of living

  - Which ones go "hand in hand" together?
  - Which ones don't go together? Why?

Development

- Distribute Worksheet C-2A, "The Rich and the Poor." Have three student volunteers perform the radio broadcast as the class reads along. After students complete the exercise on the worksheet, have them explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What does this "broadcast" tell us about the standard of living in Guatemala?
  - How does a rich Guatemalan's standard of living compare with that of a poor Guatemalan?
  - Do you think it is fair that the Gomez family is so poor while the Cortez family is so rich? Explain.
  - Would your family be able to live on a little more than $500 a year? Explain.

- Distribute Worksheet C-2B, "Cartoons: Rich and Poor." Have students examine the cartoons and complete the exercise.

- Distribute Worksheet C-2C, "Income Distribution." Before students attempt the exercise, help them to interpret the meaning of the percentages found on each graph.

- After students, working in pairs, complete the exercise, have them explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What information do these graphs give about the way income is divided in Guatemala?

  - As a poor Guatemalan, how do you like the way income is distributed in your country? As a wealthy Guatemalan, how do you feel about it? Explain.

  - Do you think this is a good way to divide the national income? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students, working in small groups, draw their own graphs to illustrate the way they would like to see income distributed in Guatemala.

The Rich and the Poor

TO THE STUDENT:

If an American reporter interviewed two Guatemalan children about their families' standards of living, the following interview might be broadcast back to the Unites States.

American Reporter: Good morning, fifth graders in the U.S.A! We are going to ask two Guatemalan children about the way their families live. They speak Spanish but we have translated their answers into English for you. Question #1: What have you eaten so far today?

Juan Gomez: I have eaten six tortillas for breakfast and two spoonsful of beans for lunch.

Maria Cortez: Our cook made my favorite breakfast for me which I first had when we visited the Unites States: fresh orange juice, pancakes, sausage, and milk. For lunch I had paella and chocolate Spanish cream. Oh, I had a cola too.

American Reporter: What are your three favorite possessions?

Juan Gomez: I have a hoop and stick which my father made out of a barrel. I have a slingshot which I use for hunting birds that we can eat. I don't really have anything else.

Maria Cortez: My favorite possessions are my horse, my 10-speed bike, and my Atari.

American Reporter: How many clothes do you have?

Juan Gomez: I have only the clothes I am wearing. When I outgrow these, they will go to my younger brother and I will wear what my older brother is wearing now.

Maria Cortez: I don't usually count my clothes. Once I did count my sweaters and I had 42 of them.

American Reporter: How much money does your family earn each year?

Juan Gomez: If I work ten to twelve hours a day and get paid as an adult, I earn about $2 a day. There are seven in my family who can work when we can find jobs. So in a year as a family we make a little more than $500.

Maria Cortez: My father says that what the family earns is private information, but if I said that he was a millionaire I wouldn't be lying.

TO THE STUDENT:

In the appropriate places in the chart below, write the name of the family with the higher standard of living and the name of the family with the lower standard of living. Then write three possessions that suggest the different standards of living of each family.

____________________ Family	____________________ Family
Higher Standard of Living	Lower Standard of Living
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

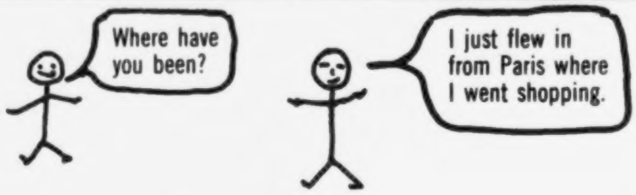
Theme IV *Central America*
Subtheme C *Economic Inequality* **Worksheet C-2B**

Cartoons: Rich and Poor

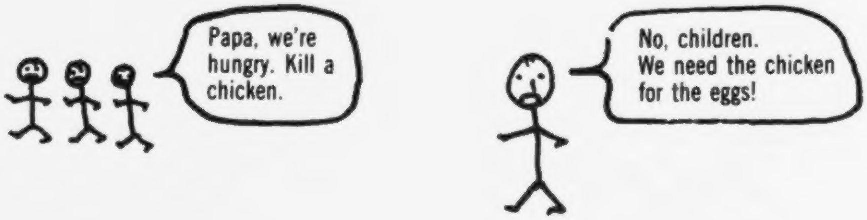
TO THE STUDENT:

Look at both cartoons and then answer the questions below.

A


Where have you been?
I just flew in from Paris where I went shopping.

B


Papa, we're hungry. Kill a chicken.
No, children. We need the chicken for the eggs!

1. Cartoon A represents the standard of living of a rich/poor family.

2. Cartoon B represents the standard of living of a rich/poor family.

3. What do Cartoons A and B show about the difference in the standards of living between the rich and poor in Central America?

____

____

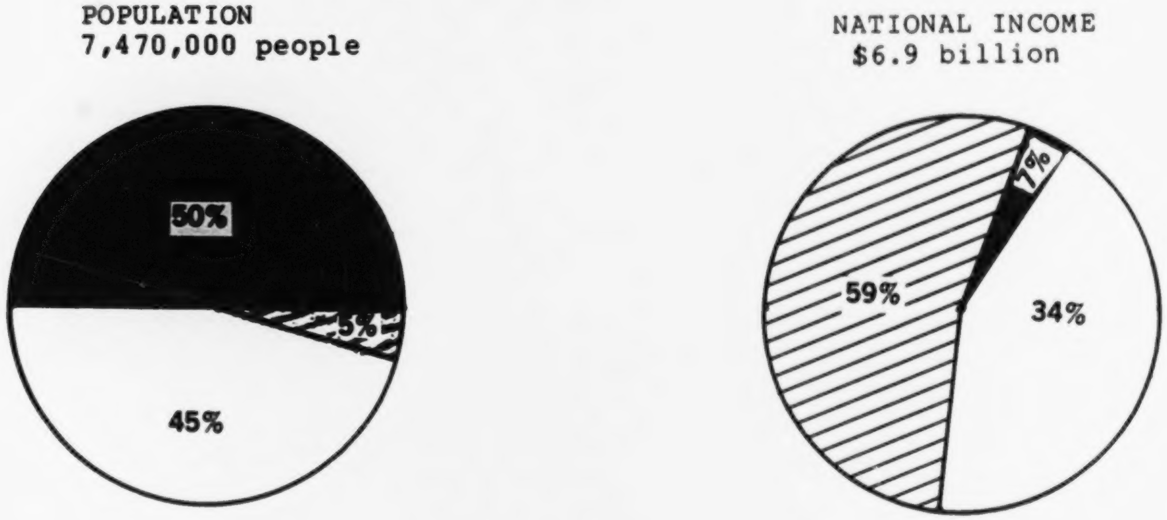
____

Income Distribution

TO THE STUDENT:

The graphs below show how national income in Guatemala is divided up among the people who live there. (National income is the total amount of money earned by the people of a country in one year.)

GUATEMALA
INCOME DISTRIBUTION



A. 5% of the people earn 59% of the national income.

B. 50% of the people earn 7% of the national income.

C. 45% of the people earn 34% of the national income.

1. What is the total population of Guatemala?________________
2. What is the total national income of Guatemala?____________
3. What percentage of the Guatemalan population earns more than half of the national income?__________________________
4. Which design on the graphs represents the richest group in Guatemala?____
5. Which design on the graphs represents the poorest group in Guatemala?____
6. In one or two sentences, explain what the graphs show.

____

____

____

STRATEGY 3

Topic: Why are the living standards of Central America's rich and poor so different?

Several factors explain the massive poverty of the majority of Central Americans. For example, in El Salvador, where the population is very dense, "land hunger" is especially great. The best farmland there is used for growing export crops. These lands are owned by some two hundred wealthy families and more than fifty multinational corporations, most of which are based in the United States. Often the only areas that are available for peasants either have poor soil or are located on steep mountains. Most farmers in the region do not know much about scientific farming methods. Often they plant the same crops on the same land year after year. This failure to rotate crops causes the soil to become less fertile. In many mountainous areas, wind and rainwater have eroded much fertile topsoil. Many farmers have not been trained to use fertilizer and/or they cannot afford to buy it. All of these factors have meant the increasing pauperization of the rural population.

Concepts

- Scarcity
- Technology

Understandings

- Individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.
- Science and technology have influenced the standard of living of people.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Analyze reasons for the great disparity between rich and poor in El Salvador.

Skills Objectives: Students will able to:

- Identify the causes and effects of problems faced by a Salvadoran family. (identifying cause and effect)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students imagine that "living standards" in their own classroom and the room next door differ greatly. Their room is much smaller than the room next door. Their room is in disrepair, while the room next door is nicely painted and furnished. Their room contains few books and materials, while the room next door has computers, an encyclopedia, art materials, etc. The students in their room would not even know how to use computers if they had them. The students next door operate their computers with ease. Ask students to explain their answers to the following questions:

- In which classroom will the students do best?
- Why will the students next door be much better off? (They have more resources, better access to technology, and greater ability to use technology than the other class has.)

. Tell students that today they will read about a family in Central America that is barely able to survive. The class will analyze reasons for their situation.

Word Warm-up: adobe, fertile, fertilizer

. Place the following sentences on the chalkboard and have students determine the meanings of the underlined words from context:

- People in hot climates sometimes live in houses built of adobe, or sun dried bricks made of clay and straw.
- Because many crops grew easily, it was said that the farmland was fertile.
- The farmer added fertilizer to the soil to make the crops grow larger.

Development

. Distribute Worksheet C-3, "A Typical Small Farm." Have students read the story and complete the exercise. Then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- What does this selection tell us about the way most Salvadorans make a living?
- What problems do the Romeros face?
- Why don't the Romeros use modern farming methods and materials?
- Is the purchase of better land a possible solution to the Romero's problems? Explain.

Summary

. Have students roleplay members of the Romero family at home on the evening that the story takes place. Instruct them to discuss their problems and how they might solve them. Give them a few minutes to prepare their roles.

. Have students write one of the following letters. (Note: First tell students that in reality members of the Romero family would have great difficulty writing letters, since most likely they would have little or no education.)

- Maria Romero writes to the government of El Salvador describing her family's difficulties and asking for help.

- Juan Romero writes to the fruit company that owns the plantation in the neighboring valley, giving his opinion about landownership in El Salvador.

- The youngest Romero child at school writes to an American penpal describing his life on a small farm in El Salvador.

A Typical Small Farm

TO THE STUDENT:

To learn about how many people in Central America make their livings, let us visit a small farm in the highlands of El Salvador.

SARAH AND RICHARD DICK

Photo from: Caldwell, John C., *Let's Visit Central America* (New York: John Day, 1973), p. 63. Photo credit: Sarah and Richard Dick.

Corn is the most important crop for many Central American farmers.

The Romero farm is located on steeply sloping land at the foot of a mountain. It is very small. The whole farm covers only six acres.

In the middle of the farm is a small adobe house with a thatched roof. This is the home of Juan and Maria Romero and their eight children. The house is shaded by tall banana plants. Near the doorway are several skinny pigs and chickens.

It is a warm, sunny morning in early spring, and Juan Romero is plowing the land in order to plant corn. He is using a crude wooden plow pulled by a pair of oxen. The Romero family does not own a tractor or other modern farm tools. They are too expensive for the Romeros to buy.

In addition to corn, the farmer grows beans and red chili peppers. These are the main foods eaten by the Romero family all year round. Sometimes Maria Romero carries a sack of corn or a basket of peppers to the marketplace in the nearest town. She trades these things for cotton cloth, cooking pans, or other things that the family needs.

The Romeros wish they could afford to buy fertilizer to improve their land. Years ago, the soil was very fertile. However, it has been used so long for growing the same crops that it no longer yields a good harvest. Although the Romeros work very hard, they barely raise enough food to meet their needs.

To earn money for necessities, the Romeros work two months each year picking coffee berries on a large farm nearby. Even so, they cannot afford to buy all the things that the family needs. The children must wear old clothing that is often shabby. They are thin and always tired, because they do not get enough of the right foods.

Sometimes, Juan Romero dreams about one day having some of the rich land in the valley. He could then grow more crops. But all the valley land is owned by one wealthy family.

EXERCISE

Match the causes on the left with their effects on the right.

	CAUSES	EFFECTS
____	1. Modern farm tools are very expensive.	A. The Romeros' land no longer yields a good harvest.
____	2. The Romeros' soil has been used over and over for growing the same crops.	B. The Romero children are thin and tired.
____	3. The Romeros' farm does not produce enough food to meet their needs.	C. To plant his corn, Juan Romero uses a crude, wooden plow.
____	4. The Romero children do not get enough of the right foods.	D. In addition to working on their own farm, the Romeros have to work two months each year on a large coffee plantation to make ends meet.

STRATEGY 4

Topic: How does a cartoonist see the U.S. government's position on Central America?

The great disparity between rich and poor in Central America, exacerbated by the corruption of right-wing governments, has made the isthmus ripe for revolution. Insurgents in many of the nations are communists--advocates of government ownership and control of the means of production so as to provide a more equal distribution of the national wealth. The Reagan administration has been accused by its critics of being so preoccupied with what it sees as the threat of communism in Central American nations that it is "blind" to the economic and social problems which give rise to leftist insurgencies.

Concepts

- Scarcity
- Revolution
- Communism

Understandings

- The levels of development and the standards of living of people vary widely.
- Among the seeds of revolution are widespread poverty, hunger, injustice, and government corruption.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

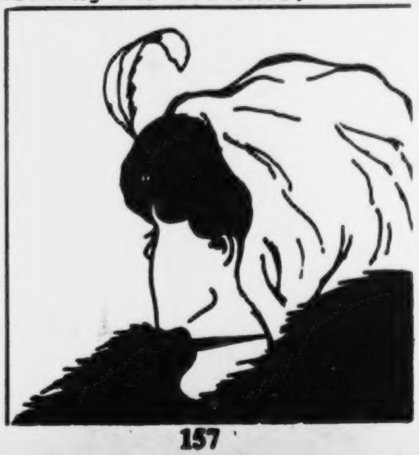
- Explain President Reagan's view of the economic and political situation in Central America.
- Assess the President's view of conditions in Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a cartoon showing different perceptions of problems in Central America. (interpreting a cartoon)
- Compare and contrast President Reagan's view of the situation in Central America with his opposition's view, as depicted in the cartoon. (comparing and contrasting points of view)

Springboard to the Activity

- Reproduce the following drawing for students:



- Ask the class:
  - What do you see in the picture? (Some students will see an old woman; others will see a young woman.)
  - Why can we all look at the same drawing yet see it differently?
- Tell the class that just as different people looking at this drawing will see different things, or have different perceptions, different people in our country looking at the problems of Central America will see the situation differently. Today the class will examine how, President Reagan according to a cartoonist, sees the situation in Central America and how his political opponents (the Democrats) see that same situation.

Word Warm-up: corruption

- Write the following sentence on the chalkboard:
  - His corruption was revealed when the politician was found to be stealing public monies for his own private use.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet C-4, "It's All in the Way You See It!" Have students examine the cartoon, complete the exercise, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - According to the cartoonist, how is the President's view of the situation in Central America different from the Democrats' view? What does the President see when he looks at Central America? What do the Democrats see?
  - Why does President Reagan see communism when he looks at the situation in Central America? Why is he afraid of the spread of communism in Central America? (Have students recall their knowledge of communism from Theme III's study of Cuban communism.)
  - In a communist system, the property of wealthy individuals is taken by the government, divided up, and given to the poor. Do you think communism would appeal to people in Central America? Explain.
  - Instead of concerning himself with communism in Central America, should President Reagan concern himself more, as the Democrats think he should, with poverty, hunger, injustice, and corruption in Central America? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Students might work in pairs to draw their own cartoons illustrating the economic problems facing Central American nations.

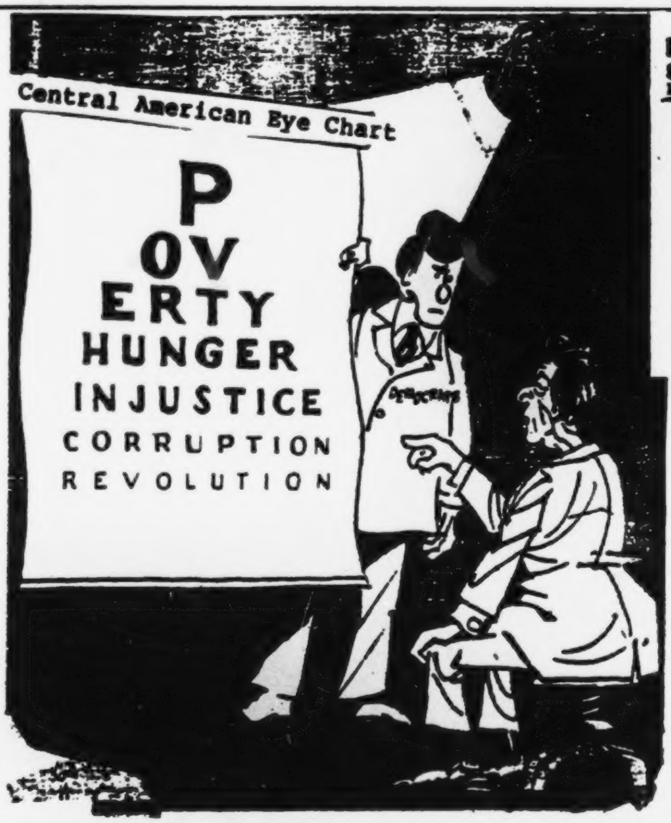
Theme IV *Central America*
Subtheme C *Economic Inequality*

Worksheet C-4

It's All in the Way You See It

TO THE STUDENT:

Base your answers to the following questions on the cartoon.


Central American Eye Chart
P
OV
ERTY
HUNGER
INJUSTICE
CORRUPTION
REVOLUTION

Dennis Renault
Sacramento Bee
[illegible]

By permission of Dennis Renault

"C-o-uh-m-m-uh-u-uh-n-uh-i-s-m!"

1. Who does the seated man represent? ____________________

2. Who does the doctor represent? ____________________

3. What words appear on the eye chart? ____________________

4. What word, not on the eye chart, does the seated man read?

____

5. Why does the man stutter as he reads this word? What does his stuttering represent? ____________________

6. What is the message of this cartoon? ____________________

____

STRATEGY 5

Topic: Should U.S. economic/military aid to Central American nations be increased?

To encourage the growth of democracy and to discourage the spread of communism, the United States under the Reagan administration has increased both its economic and military aid to the nations of Central America. The exception is Nicaragua where a Marxist government is already in power. Congressional opponents of President Reagan's aid program have insisted that military aid, particularly to the right-wing government of El Salvador, be tied to progress on human rights. They call for governments receiving aid to demonstrate progress toward free elections and the rule of law.

Concepts

- Interdependence

Understandings

- Nations depend on one another for resources and products they need.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe how United States economic aid to El Salvador impacts on an individual citizen of that country.
- Formulate hypotheses to explain the Reagan administration's increased aid to Central America.
- Evaluate United States aid to Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a chart showing United States economic and military aid to Central America. (interpreting a chart)

Springboard to the Activity

- Ask the class:
  - On what basis would you loan or give money to another person? Would you give money to someone whose ideas and actions you do not like? Would that person have to be a close friend? Would you yourself have to benefit in some way from giving the money? Would the person to whom you gave money have to fulfill specific conditions you set forth? Explain.

- Tell the class that the United States gives both economic aid (money for development) and military aid (weapons) to many of the countries in Central America. Today the class will examine U.S. aid to Central America.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet C-5A, "U.S. Economic Aid to El Salvador." Have students read, complete the exercises, and explain their answers to the following questions:

- What information does this article give about United States aid to El Salvador?

- Who is Jose Raul Aquino?

- Where do Mr. Aquino and his family live?

- How does Raul Aquino support his family?

- Do United States loans to the Salvadoran government help Raul Aquino? Explain.

. Distribute Worksheet C-5B, "United States Economic and Military Aid to Central America." Help students to read the chart by going over with them figures for the first nation listed. Instruct students to complete the exercise and explain their answers to the following questions:

- What information about United States aid to Central America does the chart give?

- Between 1981 and 1984, what happened to U.S. aid (economic and military) to Central America?

- Why has the United States been increasing both military and economic aid to the nations of Central America?

- Why have we cut off Nicaragua from military aid? (Refer students back to Worksheet B-9B.)

- Will improving Central Americans' standard of living through economic aid discourage the spread of communism?

- Should the United States give aid (economic and/or military) to the nations of Central America? Why or why not?

- Should U.S. aid to Central American nations be tied to certain conditions? If so, to what conditions? Explain.

Summary/Application

. Students might write letters or telegrams to the President of the United States giving their positions on U.S. economic and military assistance to Central American nations.

. The class might engage in a debate on the question of increasing U.S. aid to Central America.

U.S. Economic Aid to El Salvador

Rebuilding El Salvador on $3 a Day

By Michael Wright
Special to the New York Times

ATEOS, El Salvador--A stoop-shouldered man in baggy green trousers pushed a wheelbarrow piled high with wooden stakes.

The man, Jose Raul Aquino, is one of 110 men who have been hired by the Ministry of Public Works to resurface the road with sand and gravel.

Some men in the crew are tamping down dirt with improvised tools made of broom sticks cemented to milk cans. Most have walked to their jobs from nearby villages; a few have come all the way from the capital, about 20 miles to the east, and are living in makeshift camps.

$3 a Day Wages

For every day's work, Mr. Raul Aquino, like the rest of the crew, is paid 13 colones--a little over $3--and with that he supports his wife and their four children who live a little over five miles away in Jayaque, at the other end of the dirt road.

"Without this, I would have nothing at all," said Mr. Raul Aquino, who once earned his living as a woodcutter and now carves surveying spikes and pounds them into the ground where they are needed.

The road workers are among an estimated 10,000 Salvadorans, most of them unskilled laborers, involved in public works projects paid for by loans to the Salvadoran Government by the United States Agency for International Development.

Adapted from Michael Wright, "Rebuilding El Salvador on $3 a Day," *The New York Times*, August 28, 1983.

EXERCISE 1

TO THE STUDENT:

The meanings of unfamiliar words can often be figured out from the way they are used in the sentence. Look at the words which are listed in Column A and underlined in the article. See how they are used in the article. Then match the words to their meanings in Column B.

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
_____	1. stakes	a. invented at the moment
_____	2. resurface	b. packing in tightly
_____	3. tamping	c. approximate
_____	4. improvised	d. a temporary substitute
_____	5. makeshift	e. finish the outside again
_____	6. estimated	f. sharply pointed wooden posts

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Based on the article, some of the following statements can reasonably be made. Write REASONABLE next to those statements. Write NOT REASONABLE next to statements which cannot reasonably be made based on the article.

__________ 1. The Aquino family of El Salvador is very poor.

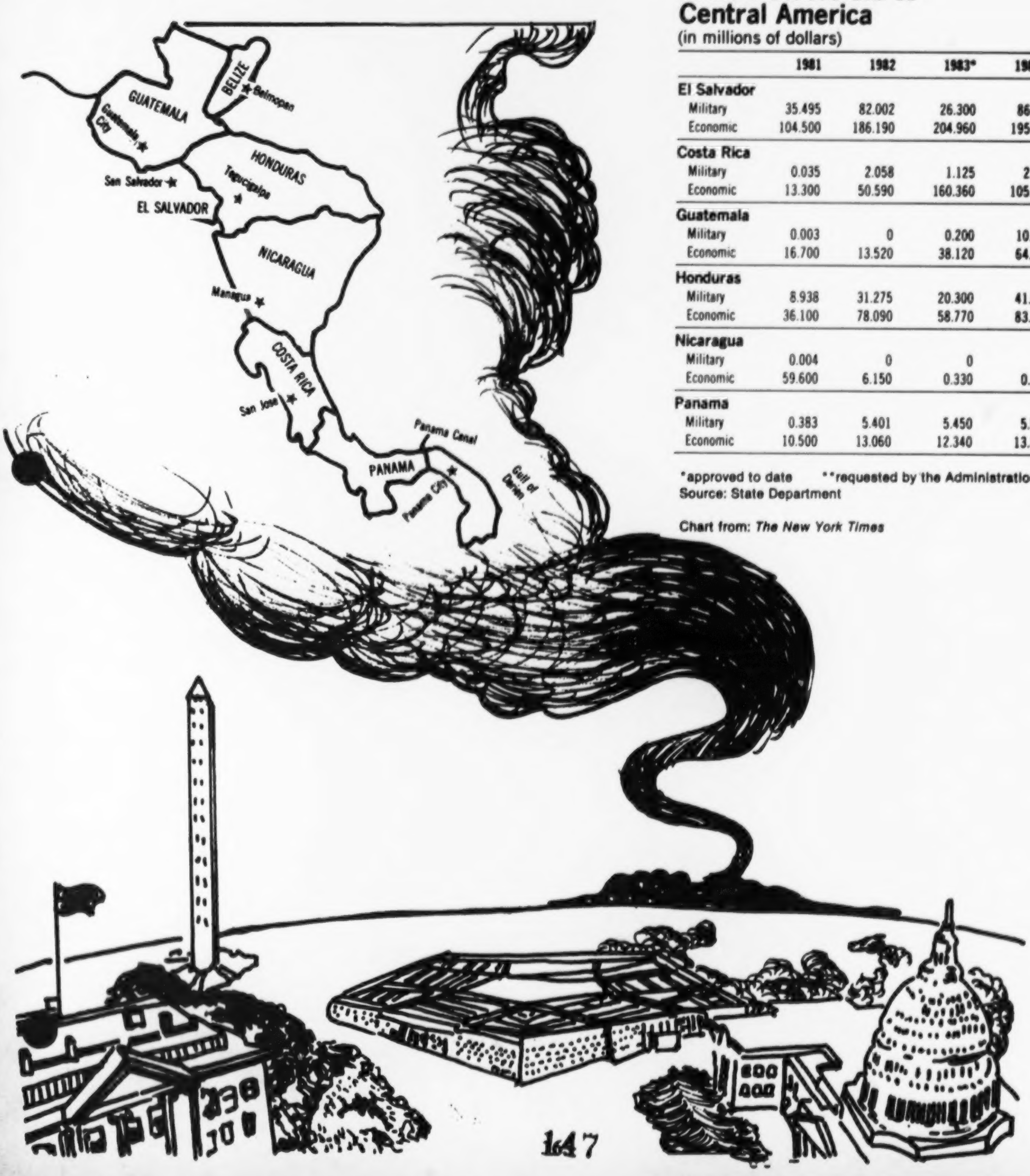
__________ 2. Many Salvadorans are very poor.

__________ 3. Many Salvadorans, though unskilled, want to work.

__________ 4. United States loans to El Salvador are making many citizens of El Salvador rich.

__________ 5. Without United States aid, many Salvadorans would have no money at all.

U.S. Economic and Military Aid to Central America


BELIZE
Belmopan
GUATEMALA
Guatemala City
HONDURAS
Tegucigalpa
San Salvador
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
Managua
COSTA RICA
San Jose
Panama Canal
PANAMA
Panama City
Gulf of Darien

United States aid to Central America

(in millions of dollars)

	1981	1982	1983*	1984**
El Salvador				
Military	35.495	82.002	26.300	86.300
Economic	104.500	186.190	204.960	195.480
Costa Rica				
Military	0.035	2.058	1.125	2.150
Economic	13.300	50.590	160.360	105.040
Guatemala				
Military	0.003	0	0.200	10.250
Economic	16.700	13.520	38.120	64.480
Honduras				
Military	8.938	31.275	20.300	41.000
Economic	36.100	78.090	58.770	83.200
Nicaragua				
Military	0.004	0	0	0
Economic	59.600	6.150	0.330	0.350
Panama				
Military	0.383	5.401	5.450	5.550
Economic	10.500	13.060	12.340	13.320

*approved to date **requested by the Administration
Source: State Department

Chart from: *The New York Times*

TO THE STUDENT:

Refer to the chart for the following questions:

1. What is the title of the chart? ____________________

2. For which two types of aid are figures given? __________

____

3. In 1983, how much did the United States give in military aid to El Salvador? ____________________

4. In 1982, how much did the United States give in economic aid to Honduras? ____________________

5. Which country has received no United States military aid since 1982? ____________________

6. In a few sentences, explain what the chart shows about United States aid to Central America. __________

____

____

____

Subtheme D *A Diversity of Cultures*

LEARNING ACTIVITY

RATIONALE

Cultural diversity characterizes Central America, as it does Mexico and the West Indies. This diversity shows itself in the population composition of the seven nations, in the religious practices of their people, and in the changes resulting from urbanization.

Although mestizos (people of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry) make up the largest part of the populations of most Central American countries, interesting variations exist in the compositions of national populations. These are the result of the different histories experienced by the seven nations.

Religious diversity also characterizes Central America. Roman Catholicism, brought centuries ago to the isthmus by Spanish missionaries, has been modified by Indian converts; their Catholicism is a fusion of the Spanish religious legacy and their own ancient Indian beliefs and customs.

Urbanization has further diversified culture in Central America. The way of life in the growing cities of the isthmus differs from life in the rural areas. In the cities, traditional values, reflected in folk literature, cuisines, handicrafts, and music, are giving way to modern, urban, industrial values.

STRATEGY 1

Topic: How is Central America today ethnically and culturally diverse?

The population make-up of Central American nations reflects their histories. Whites of European descent outnumber people of other ethnic/racial groups only in Costa Rica, where the relatively temperate climate attracted much larger numbers of Spanish settlers than did any other areas of the isthmus. Indians are a much larger percentage of the population in Guatemala than in any other Central American nation. Many of these Indians are descended from the proud Maya who lived in Guatemala centuries ago. In contrast to the West Indies, mestizos, people of mixed Indian and European ancestry, make up the largest part of the populations of most Central American countries. This is due to the fact that there were more native people in Central America than in the islands. Also, the Spanish were able to force the Indians to work for them, making unnecessary the importation of forced African labor. These factors explain the small number, relative to the West Indies, of blacks in Central America today. The most notable exception is Belize, a former British colony, to which slaves were brought from the British West Indies to help harvest the forest products of that country. Most of the blacks who form significant proportions of the populations of other Central American nations--for example, Nicaragua and Panama--are descendants of free workers who moved to the Central American lowlands from the West Indies during the 1800s and early 1900s, after slavery had been abolished.

Concepts

- Culture

Understandings

- Individuals have historic roots which contribute to the diversity of culture in the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the population composition of Central American nations.
- Analyze reasons for the population composition of Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Interpret a chart showing the population make-up of Central America. (interpreting a chart)
- Make inferences about language and culture in Central American nations. (making inferences)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have students use the chalkboard to chart the ethnic make-up of the class. Ask them to decide upon the appropriate ethnic headings, for example:

	POPULATION MAKEUP			
Class	Italian	Puerto Rican	Afro-American	Jamaican
5-304	10	5	10	5

- Then ask the class:
  - How would you explain the ethnic make-up of this class? (Students should offer explanations such as: "Some families in this part of the city are descendants of Italians who immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries" or "Many Afro-Americans are the descendants of Africans who were enslaved and brought to this continent in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries."
- Tell students that just as the ethnic make-up of their class can be explained by looking at the history of our country, the ethnic/racial make-up of Central American nations can also be explained by examining their histories.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet D-1, "The People of Central America." Have students examine the chart, complete Exercise 1, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What information does this table give about the population of Central America?
  - How would you explain the large mestizo population found in most Central American nations? (Refer students back to Worksheet B-3, which describes the Indian workforce employed by Spanish hacienda owners.)
  - Why do you think Guatemala has the largest percent of Indian population of any of these countries?
  - Costa Rica is the only Central American nation where whites make up over half of the population. Belize is the only Central American nation where blacks make up over half of the total population. What hypotheses (educated guesses) would you offer to explain these facts? How can you check your hypotheses or guesses?
  - Judging from the table and from your knowledge of Central American history, what languages would you expect to find spoken in Central America? Explain.
  - What does the table suggest about culture in Central America?

Summary/Application

- Have students work in pairs to complete Exercise 2 on the worksheet, which calls for them to translate data in the table into a bar graph.

EXERCISE 1

The People of Central America

TO THE STUDENT:

Use the chart below to answer the questions.

THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Population Makeup (Percentages)

Country	Indian	White	Mestizo*	Black
Guatemala	41	8	49	2
El Salvador	10	1	89	0
Honduras	7	1	90	2
Nicaragua	5	17	69	9
Costa Rica	1	85	12	2
Panama	7	9	70	14
Belize	19	8	22	51

* Mestizos are people of mixed Indian and European ancestry.

Buggey, JoAnne, *Latin America and Canada:* Annotated Teacher's Edition (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1983), p. 182. Permission pending.

1. What percent of Guatemala's population is Indian? ________
2. In which countries are mestizos more than two-thirds (67%) of the population? ________________________________
3. Which country has the greatest percent of blacks? ________
4. Which country has the highest percent of whites? ________
5. In one sentence, summarize the information given in the table. ________________________________

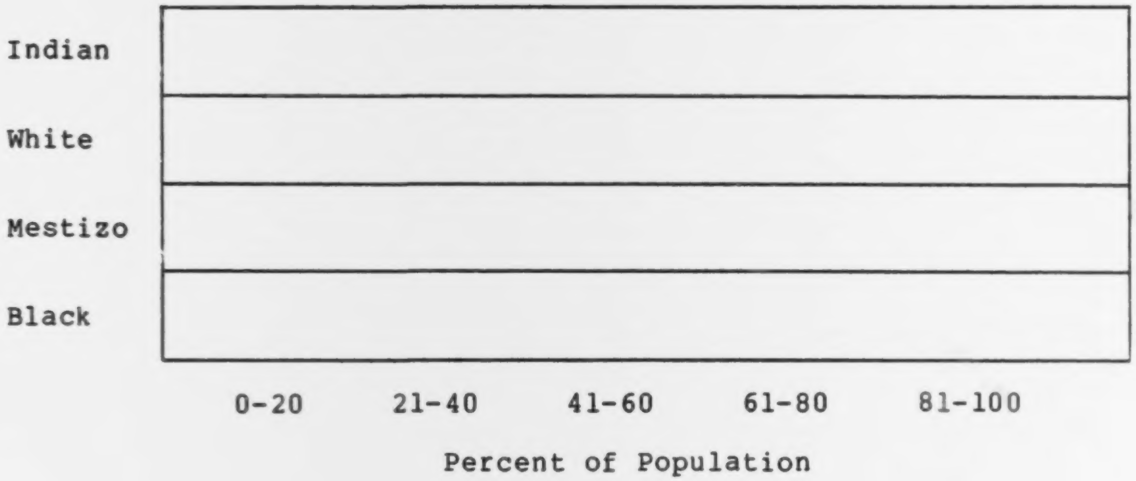
____

EXERCISE 2

TO THE STUDENT:

Choose any one of the Central American nations on the table and make a bar graph below showing the make-up of its population.

BAR GRAPH SHOWING POPULATION OF ______________________



STRATEGY 2

Topic: How is Indian Catholicism in Central America a mixture of native and Spanish customs and beliefs?

Many Central American Indians are Catholics. In some cases, however, their Catholicism, a legacy of the Spanish conquistadors, has been fused with age-old Indian religious beliefs and customs.

Concepts

- Culture

Understandings

- Through migration and immigration people of different cultural backgrounds influence one another.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Analyze the elements of Indian Catholicism in Central America: Spanish Catholic, and native Indian.
- Explain the mixture of religious beliefs and customs that is Indian Catholicism in Central America.

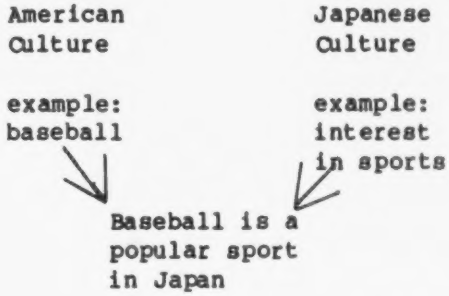
Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Categorize the features of religion in Guatemala as traditional Indian and Spanish Catholic. (categorizing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Tell students that often when people from two different cultures come together each one contributes parts of his or her culture. The result is a mixture of both cultures.

- To illustrate this cultural diffusion, draw the following diagram on the chalkboard:


American Culture
example: baseball
Japanese Culture
example: interest in sports
Baseball is a popular sport in Japan

- Ask students:
  - How does this diagram show that when two cultures meet the result is often a mixture of both traditions?
  - Why do you suppose this mixture occurs?
- Tell the class that today they will examine the mixture of Indian and Spanish beliefs and practices that has become the religion of many Guatemalans today.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet D-1, "A Mixture of Faiths." Have students read, complete the exercise, and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What story does this "diary entry" tell about religion among many Guatemalan Indians today?
  - How is the religion of Indians today a mixture of both Catholic beliefs and practices brought by the Spaniards and age-old Indian beliefs and practices?
  - Why do you think this mixture of beliefs and practices occurred? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Students working in small groups or in pairs might brainstorm other examples of mixtures of traditions and customs resulting from the interactions of cultures. They could then create a poster using the diagram found in the springboard of this strategy to illustrate one such example.

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A Mixture of Faiths

TO THE STUDENT:

Many Central American Indians are Catholics. In a lot of cases, however, their Catholic religious beliefs and practices are mixed with their own very old Indian religious beliefs and practices.

In the following diary account, a traveler in Guatemala describes this mixture of faiths.

Dear Diary,

I first visited the cathedral on Thursday before Easter. As I was about to leave, I saw a small group of Indians go down some steep steps which led under the cathedral floor. I followed them into a dark little underground room where candles burned before a cross. They and their ancestors had been lighting candles there for so long that the walls and roof were blackened with soot from the smoke of the candles. So, too, was the cross before which the Indians now silently prayed.

A few minutes earlier they had been saying prayers before the crucifix (cross on which there is a figure of Christ) in the old cathedral. Now they prayed some special prayers before a special cross. For in this cross they believed lived a spirit to whom due honor must also be paid.

Over lunch a priest told me that that same morning one of his best assistants had gone straight from serving Mass to leading a group of Indians to a figureless cross high up in the hills. There he led them in prayer. It was not to the God whom the Spaniards had brought to them 500 years ago that he and the other Indians had prayed, but to the spirit of the mountain who, they believed, lived within this part-pagan, part-Christian symbol. . . .

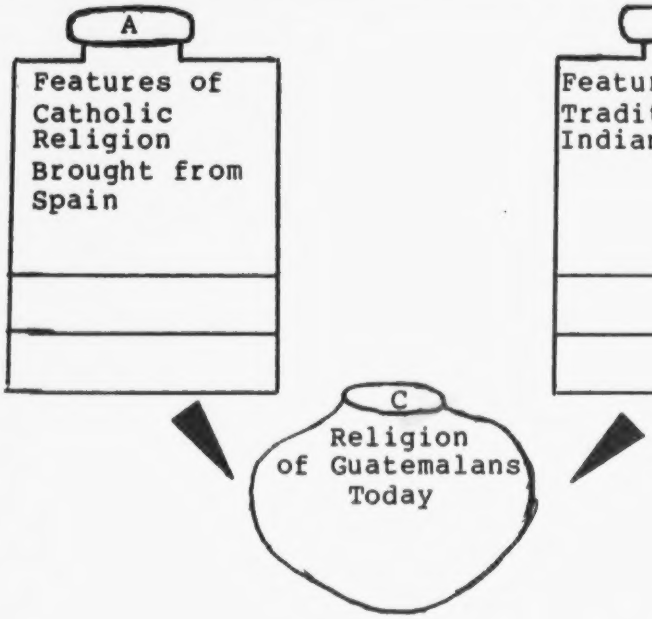
In many parts of Guatemala the Indians have put up their own crosses on which there is no figure of Christ. These crosses are often placed in spots where a nature spirit is believed to dwell. Often, when mission priests have brought an Indian community to the point where they believe the people now to be Christianized, they ask them . . . to get rid of the crosses they possess so that these may be replaced by crucifixes. . . .

Adapted from Hyde, Douglas, *The Troubled Continent* (Dayton, OH: Pflaum Press, 1967), pp. 23-24. Permission pending.

EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT:

First read the diary entry. Then in "Bottle A" below list features of the Catholic religion brought to Guatemala from Spain by the conquistadors. In "Bottle B" list features of the Indians' very old religion which, when mixed with the beliefs and practices brought from Spain, became the Catholic religion of many Guatemalans.


A
Features of Catholic Religion Brought from Spain
B
Features of Traditional Indian Religion
C
Religion of Guatemalans Today

STRATEGY 3

Topic: What does a legend tell us about the culture of Guatemala's Quiche Indians?

Like societies around the world, the various Indians of Central America have their own legends to explain the natural environment that surrounds them.

Concepts

- Culture

Understandings

- The artistic and recreational activities of people are reflections of their values and beliefs.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify the values and beliefs reflected in a Quiche legend.
- Explain the telling of legends by the Quiche people.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Put events occurring in the Quiche legend in sequential order. (sequencing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of the popular legends with which they are familiar, for example: Johnny Appleseed, Paul Bunyon, George Washington and the cherry tree.

- Ask the class:

  - What is a legend? (An unverifiable story handed down by tradition from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical.)

  - Why do legends develop?

  - Can we learn about a culture through its legends? Explain.

- Tell students that today they will read a Guatemalan Indian legend and analyze what it tells us about the culture.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet D-3, "A Guatemalan Indian Legend." Read the legend aloud as the class reads along. Have students complete the exercise and explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What story do the Quiche tell about the origin of the white orchid?

- What does this legend suggest about the way of life of the Quiche Indians?
- Why do you think the Quiche told this legend? What aspects of their natural environment does it help explain?
- What does this legend suggest about the Quiche attitude toward nature?
- Have other societies told legends to explain their natural environment? Give examples.

Summary/Application

. Have students, alone or in pairs, choose some aspect of their own natural environment and then invent a legend to explain it. Have them write and illustrate their legends. Then have students read their legends aloud.

A Legend of the Monja Blanca

(MON-ha BLAN-ca)

Cobán is one of the loveliest regions in Guatemala. Every inch of its valleys, hills, and mountains is covered with beautiful flowers, plants, and shrubs. Among these is the national flower of Guatemala, the Monja Blanca (White Nun) an orchid with large, thick white petals.

There are various legends about this orchid among the Quiche Indians. Here is one of them.

Once upon a time the Quiche region was suffering from a summer so hot and dry that the crops were being ruined and the people were threatened with famine and misery. When the Quiche people were faced with serious trouble or danger, it was their custom to seek aid of their gods by offering them human sacrifices.

One morning the chiefs, the wise men, and the witch doctors of all the tribes met in council to discuss the terrible drought that was afflicting them. After much argument, it was decided that the only offering that could induce the gods to send life-giving rain was the sacrifice of the most beautiful maiden of the region, a princess whose name was Ruz (roos).

Among those who met in this council was Manu (MAH-noo), a young prince. Manu loved Ruz, and when he heard what had been decided he ran ahead to warn her. He told her that he would pray to Tzul-Taka, the great god of the mountains, to save her from death.

Manu prayed for many hours, making offerings and beseeching Tzul-Taka to deliver Ruz from her fate. He was so exhausted from his praying that he fell into a deep sleep. In a dream Tzul-Taka descended from his home high in the mountains, and said to Manu: "Your long hours of prayer have proved to me that your love for Ruz is so great that it must not be unrewarded. She must flee from the valley into the mountains. Look for her there, and you will find in a tree a strange and beautiful flower."

As soon as Manu awoke, he went to Ruz and told her of his dream. She and some of the other village girls decided to flee into the mountains. When the council, who had been preparing for the sacrifice and calling the people to witness it, came to look for her, they found that she had disappeared. They spent three days and nights searching for her among the mountains and cliffs. At the end of the third day they caught sight of the group of fleeing girls, but when they arrived at the spot the girls had mysteriously vanished.

Prince Manu, who had followed the searchers, was puzzled by the girls' disappearance and stayed behind while the others went on through the forest. He remembered the words of Tzul-Taka in his dream and decided to press on to the summit of the mountain. On the mountaintop, he stopped, amazed. There, before his eyes, was a great garden of flowering bulbs he had never seen before. Even as he watched, one of the bulbs blossomed into a beautiful white orchid and he heard a voice saying: "This is I, Ruz. This is the way Tzul-Taka has delivered me as he promised. We shall remain together on earth and in heaven."

Upon hearing these words, Manu felt a strange sensation creep over his body, and he fell dead. Thus, the legend says, were Manu and Ruz united forever, when Tzul-Taka transformed Ruz into a white orchid and Manu into a tall palm tree and surrounded them with the rest of the maidens who had become lovely orchids of different colors.

U.S. Committee For UNICEF, *Hi Neighbor Book No. 5: Burma, Guatemala, Spain, Sudan, UAR* (New York: Hastings, 1961), p. 24. Permission pending.

EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT:

Place the following events in the order in which they occurred in the Quiche legend. Write a number 1 next to the event which happened first, a number 2 next to the event which happened next, etc.

_____ A. A terrible drought occurred in the Quiche region.

_____ B. A young prince, Manu, in love with Ruz, warned her of the council's plan.

_____ C. A council met and decided that only by sacrificing the beautiful Princess Ruz would the gods send rain to the region.

_____ D. In a dream, Tzul-Taka told Manu that Ruz must flee to the mountains.

_____ E. Manu prayed to the great god of the mountains, Tzul-Taka, to save Ruz from death.

_____ F. Ruz fled to the mountains, escaping the council.

_____ G. Tzul-Taka changed Manu into a tall palm tree and united him with Ruz forever.

_____ H. Prince Manu looked for Ruz on the mountain top, where he found her changed into a beautiful white orchid.

STRATEGY 4

Topic: Can members of a rural Guatemalan family meet the family's basic needs?

The typical village family in Central America is an extended one with several generations living and working together under the same roof. The stresses on this family are acute as its members, each in his or her specific traditional role, make decisions affecting the family's very survival.

Concepts

- Culture
- Interdependence

Understandings

- Family structure varies from place to place over time.
- Family interdependence is necessary to meet the needs and wants of family members.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the structure and roles in a typical Guatemalan village family.
- Recognize the life and death decisions faced by many families in Central America.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast the income of a Guatemalan family with its necessary expenses. (comparing and contrasting)
- Predict the consequences to the family and its members of various decisions they might make.

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of the American family--its organization and the roles of its members.

- Ask the class:

  - Is there any such thing as a "typical" American family?

  - In most American homes, do several generations live under one roof?

  - Are most American families large (more than two children) or small (two or fewer children)?

  - In an American family, what is the role of the father? the mother? male children? female children?

  - How do members of American families work together to meet the family's needs and wants? Explain.

- Tell students that the typical family living in a rural village in Central America is quite different from most families in the United States. Today the class will examine how a Guatemalan village family struggles to provide for very basic needs.

Development

- Make five copies of Worksheet D-4A, "Family Life in Guatemala: A Simulation."

- Divide the class into groups of seven. Give each group a copy of the worksheet. Have them cut the worksheet on the dotted lines so that each member of the group has a card describing the role of one of the family members, including the baby.

  (Even though the baby would not really be able to join in the discussion, the student representing her can join in the decision-making on her behalf.) Ask students to read and carefully study their assigned roles.

- Distribute Worksheet D-4B, "Family Needs"; Worksheet D-4C, "Income and Expenses"; and Worksheet D-4D, "Possible Family Decision." Tell each family that their tasks are:
  - First, based on the information given in Worksheets D-4A and D-4B, to determine the weekly income of the Tzul family and their weekly expenses. They should use Worksheet D-4B to do their figuring.
  - Second, to decide as a family what action to take in each of the situations described on Worksheet D-4D, giving reasons why they would or would not take the particular action.

- Encourage each student to respond as he/she thinks the family member he or she represents would. Also, tell the class that Guatemalan families tend to operate as units rather than as individuals; that is, they tend to make decisions that benefit all family members. Emphasize that this is a family in which members care about each other.

- As the simulation progresses, the family members will feel the frustration of their roles and of making life and death decisions.

- Have each of the groups explain one of its "decisions" to the class. Finally debrief the simulation by having students explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What did this activity tell you about families and family life in rural Guatemala?
  - How did you feel playing the role of a Guatemalan family member?
  - How did you feel about the decisions you made?
  - Did your role in the family affect your part in the decision making? Explain.

- How do the roles played by members of this Guatemalan family compare with the roles of American family members?

- Has your own family ever had to make decisions similar to these?

- Are there features of the Tzul's family life that you would like to see in your own family life? How would it be to see your grandparent every day? Would you like to live in a village where people don't need locks on their doors? Would living in a one-room house help a child who had nightmares? Explain.

Application/Summary

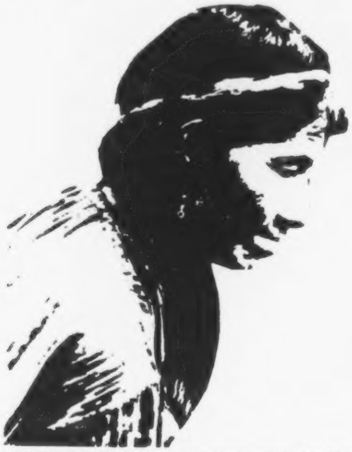
. Pairs of students might take the roles of any two members of the Tzul family and write a dialogue which could take place between them concerning one or more of the family's problems. Students could then act out their dialogues for the class.

Family Life in Guatemala

TO THE STUDENT:

Meet the Tzul family of rural Guatemala. Below, family members introduce themselves and describe their roles within the family.

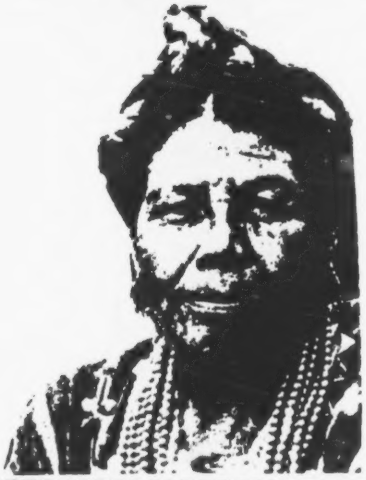
FAMILY LIFE IN GUATEMALA



I am Grandmother Tzul. I am 46 years old--very old by Guatemalan standards! Most people in my country do not live so long.

I used to weave and sew most of my family's clothes. But thread costs too much now; it is cheaper to buy clothing made in Taiwan and El Salvador.

Now I help take care of the children. I love to tell them stories about our ancestors.



I am Carman Tzul. I am the mother of the family. I care for the children, prepare the food, and keep our one-room house clean.

I wash the laundry for the plantation owner's family. They pay me $2.50 each week.

Our only water source is a well which is one mile from home. Every day I go there with my daughter Juanita. We carry water back in clay pots on our heads.

I am Mario Tzul, the father of the family. I own one acre of land that I inherited from my father. That acre produces just one half of the food our family needs to survive. So, I sell the crops to buy corn and rice.

I also work at the coffee plantation close by. I work 10 to 12 hours a day, six days of the week. The work is seasonal, so I have this job only about eight months of the year.

For all my work, I earn $15 a week.

I am Juanita. I am 12 years old. I have two brothers and a sister. I had two more sisters, but they died when they were babies.

I used to go to school. I learned to write my name and to read a little bit. But I don't go to school anymore. I must help my mother at home with the laundry because we need the money.

I am Carlos. I am 10 years old. I go to school in the village. It takes me about one hour to walk there from my home. After school, I gather firewood to sell. I earn $1 a week. I use this money to buy my school books. Sometimes, I buy a bottle of soda.

I spend a lot of time out of doors. I know a lot about nature. I can usually tell what the next day's weather will be like. I am friends with many of the animals.

I am Jose Tzul. I am eight years old, but most people guess that I am six because I am not very big. My parents say that I am small for my age because they couldn't get enough food for me to eat when I was a baby. They say that is why I cannot see very well now. Because I can't see well and I am sick a lot, I do not go to school.

I am lucky that my grandmother lives with us. She takes care of me and baby Maria since everybody else works away from home. She has taught me lots of songs. I sing every day. I am learning all the songs of my village.

This is the baby, Maria. We all treasure her because two other children died before she was born. Maria is six months old.

SOURCE: "Indian Family Life in Guatemala." Copyright © Svien-Passi. Permission pending.

Family Needs

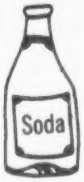
FOOD NEEDS

To be healthy, a Guatemalan person needs to eat each day at least:

1 lb. of corn
1/2 lb of beans
1/2 lb. of rice

1/2 lb. of chicken or an extra 1/4 lb. of beans
1 egg
3 cups of milk

FOOD NEEDS:



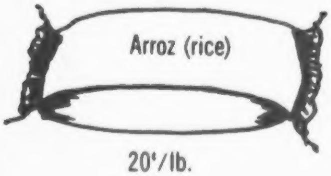
20¢

Beans

20¢/lb.

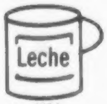
Pollo (chicken)
75¢/lb.

Huevos (eggs)
10¢ each

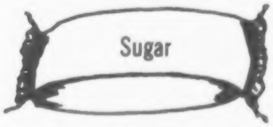


20¢/lb.

Maize (corn)
10¢/lb.



(milk)
10¢/cup



50¢

OTHER NEEDS:

Candles (for light at night)
10¢/week

Firewood (for cooking)
$2.50/week

Family Income and Expenses

TO THE STUDENT:

First, use the descriptions of Tzul family members and their roles found on Worksheet D-4A to figure out the amount of money earned by family members in one week. Then, use Worksheet D-4B to determine how much money the family must spend in one week to meet its most basic needs.

TZUL FAMILY INCOME (per week)

Father's earnings =

Mother's earnings =

Son Carlos' earnings =

TOTAL FAMILY EARNINGS =

TZUL FAMILY EXPENSES (per week)

FOOD--

Each person's food costs for a day =

X 7 days a week =

X 7 family members =

TOTAL FOOD COST =

OTHER EXPENSES --

firewood =

candles =

other =

TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES =

TOTAL EXPENSES =

Tzul Family Decision Chart

TO THE STUDENT:

Listed below are some decisions facing the Tzul family. In your roles as members of the Tzul family, discuss what the family should do. Write your family decisions in the spaces provided. Then explain your reasons.

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS/ACTIONS	OUR FAMILY DECISION	REASONS
1. Carlos may work on the coffee plantation instead of going to school. Wage: $5 per week.		
2. Juanita could go to live with a wealthy family in town and care for their children. Wage: food, housing, and $1 per month.		
3. Grandmother is sick. A visit to the doctor is recommended but the doctor is five miles away. One week's supply of medicine will cost $1.50.		
4. Baby Maria is sick. Carman has heard an advertisement on the radio that infant formula helps babies become healthier. Cost $.25 a day. If Carman stops breast feeding, she cannot begin again.		

	OUR FAMILY DECISION	REASONS WHY
5. Workers on the coffee plantation organize a labor union and decide to go on strike. The workers are asking for a $15 per week raise. The plantation owner has threatened to kill the strikers. If Mario joins the union he may lose his job or his life. If he does not join, he will lose the help and friendship of the other workers.		

STRATEGY 5

Topic: Why are Central American cities growing rapidly?

Although most of the people in Central America live in rural areas, the cities in this region are growing rapidly. For some people who have migrated from their small farms in the country, life in the cities is not much of an improvement. Because newcomers to the cities are unskilled, they can only find low-paying jobs or no jobs at all. Consequently, they are forced to live in crowded slums.

However, not all city people live this way. Many hold well-paid jobs in the modern offices, industries, and stores that line downtown streets. These people live much the way the average American does. They have refrigerators, automobiles, and other modern conveniences. Their homes are attractive and well-furnished. They attend the symphony and the ballet.

Concepts

- Culture
- Change

Understandings

- Change is a constant in history.
- The culture in which people live influences their opportunities for personal growth and development.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe the attractions of a Central American city.
- Make inferences about life in a Central American city.
- Formulate hypotheses concerning reasons for the migration of people from the countryside to the cities.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Use a post card to summarize the attractions of city life in Central America. (summarizing)

Springboard to the Activity

- Engage students in a discussion of the attractions of New York City. Ask the class:
  - Why do people from all over the United States and the world come to visit and live in New York City?
  - What attractions does city life hold for visitors? for the people who live there?
  - Would you rather live in big city or in a rural area?

- Tell students that today in Central America many people are moving from the countryside to growing cities. Today the class will examine why.

Development

- Distribute Worksheet D-5, "The Attractions of the Cities." Have students read and explain their answers to the following questions:
  - What does this "ad" suggest about the attractions of Guatemala City?
  - Based on this ad, how do you suppose people live in Guatemala City?
  - Are there any likenesses between city life in Guatemala and city life in the United States? Explain.
  - How does the way of life in Guatemala City compare with the way of life in the Guatemalan countryside? (Refer students back to Worksheet D-4A.)
  - How does this ad help explain why many Central American peasants have been moving to the cities?
  - As a Guatemalan peasant, would you move to Guatemala City? Explain.
  - Are advertisements reliable sources of information? Do they give the whole picture? Would you expect an advertisement for Guatemala City to mention the existence there of poor people and slums? Explain.

Summary/Application

- Have students complete the worksheet exercise, which calls for them to write a summary of the attractions of Central American city life.

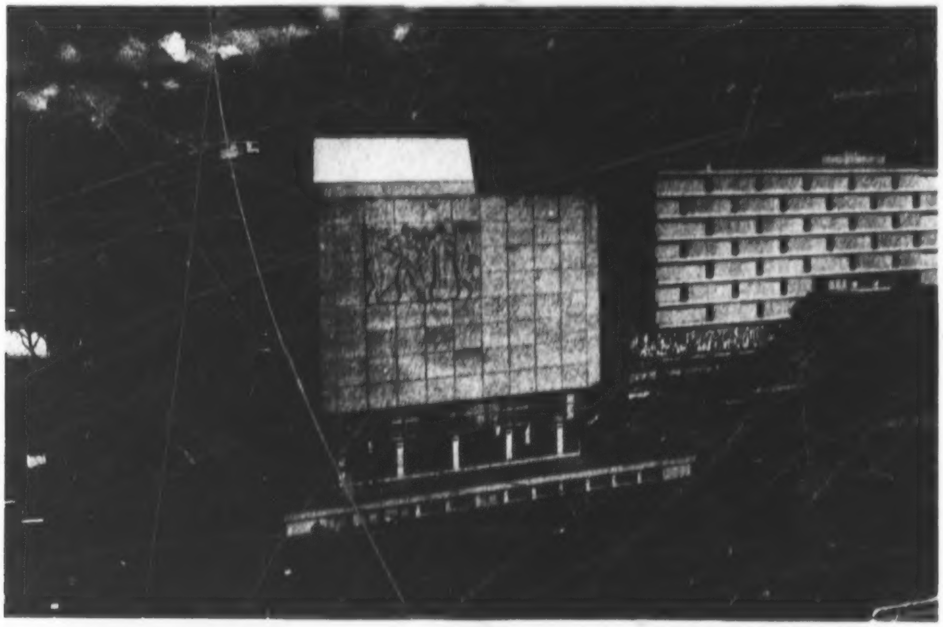
The Attractions of the Cities

TO THE STUDENT:

An advertisement for Guatemala City might look like the following:

Visit Guatemala City

The Largest, Liveliest City in Central America



Left, City Hall. Right, Social Security Institute, Guatemala City.

Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: Lippincott & Co., 1965), p. 59. Photo credit: Guatemala Tourist Bureau. Permission pending.

Walk along the streets of Guatemala City. You will see:

- Modern office buildings--some decorated with ancient Mayan designs.
- Stores with windows displaying TV sets, watches, washing machines, refrigerators, and perfumes.
- A steady stream of American, German, Japanese, and British automobiles rolling along.
- Many attractive houses in the outlying part of the city.
- Beautiful churches built centuries ago by the Spanish.

- The Central Market--one of the largest in the world--with people selling eggs and embroidery, basketware and bananas, blouses and greens.
- Three universities.
- Bookshops on practically every corner.
- Regular performances of the Guatemalan Symphony Orchestra and the Modern Ballet Company.
- People of many different ethnic backgrounds.

Photo from: Karen, Ruth, *The Land and People of Central America* (New York: Lippincott & Co., 1965), p. 62.
Photo credit: United Nations.

Guatemalan women pass a corner of the National Palace on their way to the Mercado Central.

EXERCISE

TO THE STUDENT

Pretend that, attracted by the above advertisement, you are visiting Guatemala City. Write a postcard back to your family in the United States, describing the attractions of Guatemala City. Use the space below.

Dear____________

Yours truly,

____

STRATEGY 6

Topic: How do Central American customs and traditions reflect the region's history and geography?

Fiestas are important to the people of Central America. In this region, many families do not have radios or television sets for entertainment. They look forward eagerly to the gaiety and excitement of the festivals. At festival time, people living in rural areas have a chance to go the the villages to meet their friends and hear the latest news. Festivals are enjoyed by rich and poor alike. Even the poorest peasant may win praise for skillful singing and dancing, for handicrafts, or for an unusual costume.

In addition to patron saints' days, celebrated by every village and town, there are the special fiestas. These include the Holy Week Easter celebration held in Antigua, Guatemala; the marimba fiesta in San Miguel, El Salvador; the Nicaraguan festival held each September to commemorate the battle in which William Walker received a trouncing from the people of Central America; and in Costa Rica, the Christmas festivities highlighted by the bullfights.

Concepts

- Culture
- Environment

Understandings

- The artistic and recreational activities of people are reflections of their values and beliefs.
- Through migration and immigration, people of different cultural backgrounds influence one another.
- People are affected by their physical environment as they attempt to fulfill basic needs.

Content Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Create a Central American mini-fiesta.
- Analyze the values and beliefs of Central Americans as reflected in various aspects of their folk culture.
- Explain the influence of Central American geography and history on customs and traditons.

Skills Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Assume responsibility for carrying out tasks. (assuming responsibility)

Springboard to the Activity

- Have the class brainstorm a list of holidays celebrated in the United States. Ask students:
  - How are these holidays celebrated?

- Do people engage in any special activities (traditions, customs) on those days?

- What is the origin of these holiday traditions?

- Is it important to celebrate holidays?

- Tell students that today they will begin to create a Central American holiday celebration--the fiesta.

Development

- Divide the class into small groups of equal size, and distribute one portion of Worksheet D-6, "Central American Festival Activities," to each group. (Note: A variety of activities is presented on the worksheet. Select those that are most feasible. Assign one activity to each small group.) Give students sufficient time to prepare the activity, as directed on the worksheet. Materials might have to be brought from home; food might have to be prepared at home. Then run a mini-carnival to which other classes (and perhaps parents) can be invited. Groups that have made handicrafts should set up booths or tables in the classroom to display their work. Groups that have practiced Central American folk songs should perform for all guests. Competitions might be held as they are in Central America. Guests should be invited to play the Central American game that is included on the worksheet. Students might come to the festival dressed in traditional attire or in colorful costumes. Records of Central American music (borrowed from the public library) might be played to add to the atmosphere.

- As a follow-up to the fiesta, have students explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What does the folk culture of Central American peoples tell us about their way of life, their beliefs, and what they think is important?

  - How has the natural environment of Central America influenced the traditions of its people? Explain.

  - How has the history of Central America influenced its traditions? Explain.

  - Why do you think fiestas are such an important part of the lives of Central American people?

  - Are holiday celebrations in the United States as important a part of our lives? Why or why not?

Summary/Application

- Have students choose one holiday celebrated in this country which has special meaning for them. Ask them to pretend it is the night after the celebration and have them write in their diaries about their reactions to the day's activities.

- Have students research and report to the class on Central American customs and traditions peculiar to specific Central American festivals, like those mentioned in the introduction to this strategy. If possible, have natives of Central American nations (either students in the school or individuals in the community) visit the class and describe their homeland's celebrations.

Central American Festival Activities

Activity 1: Recipes

EL SALVADOR RICE PUDDING
(Arroz Leche)

From the smallest country in Central America, where rice is an important crop, comes this top-of-the-stove pudding. It's a filling dessert with a faint lemony fragrance.

2 cups water	2 cups milk
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup rice	1/3 cup sugar

1 long strip of lemon peel

Boil the water with the salt. Add the rice and cook over low heat for 20 to 25 minutes, until the water is absorbed. Add the milk, cinnamon, sugar and lemon peel. Mix thoroughly, bring to a boil, then cook over low heat for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve warm or cold. Serves 4.

Recipe and illustration from: "El Salvador Rice Pudding" from Shapiro, Rebecca, *Wide World Cookbook for Girls and Boys* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1959), p. 6.

FRIED EMPANADAS

Guatemala

Pastry	Filling
1 cup flour	1 lb. ground meat
1/2 tsp. salt	black pepper to taste
1 tsp. baking powder	3 tbs. tomato paste
2 tbs. shortening	salt to taste
1/3 cup milk	1 tbs. shortening
2 tbs. chopped onion	1 tbs. chili powder

Heat shortening in a large skillet, and saute meat and onion until brown. Add tomatoes, chili powder and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 15 minutes. Set aside.

To make pastry, mix together flour, salt, baking powder, shortening and milk. Knead as for biscuits, but roll out dough paper thin. Cut into large round circles.

Place a spoonful of meat mixture on pastry, fold over and press edges together with a fork.

Fry rapidly in deep fat until brown. Serve hot. Serves 25.

TAMALE PIE

Guatemala

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
5 tbs. salad oil
2 chopped onions
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbs. chili powder
2 1/2 cups tomatoes, strained
2 tbs. salt
1 1/2 cups pitted olives, cut coarsely
6 cups boiling water
2 cups yellow corn meal
1/2 cup grated cheese

Heat oil in a large skillet and brown beef. Add onion and garlic and cook until golden. Add salt, chili powder, tomatoes and olives. Cook very slowly for 1 1/2 hours

Slowly stir in corn meal. Cook 15 minutes longer, stirring constantly.

Line a greased baking dish with 1-inch layer of the mush. Pour in meat filling. Spread remaining cornmeal mixture on top. Bake for 1 1/2 hours in a 325 F oven. During the last 15 minutes, sprinkle top of pie with grated cheese. Serves 6-8.

Cannon, Sister Mary Carol, M.M. and Lorang, Sister Mary Corde, M.M., compilers, *Maryknoll International Cookbook* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 71, 77. Permission pending.

Activity 2: Traditional Costumes of Guatemala

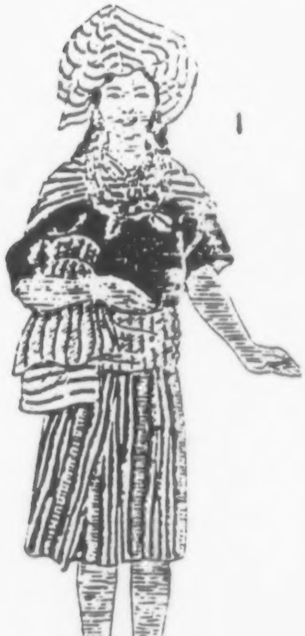
1. A young woman of the Quiches, an ancient Mayan tribe. The tzule which forms a turban but which is also a kerchief or servietta, the sash, bag and rebozo (folded) are orange-striped in red and black. The huipil or blouse is black and the wrap-around skirt is dark blue with light blue stripes.

2. A well-dressed gentlemen or village elder in a very fine straw hat over a red headcloth. His red shirt is striped in black and white. The white cotton breeches are striped in red, over which he wears the black breechclout. He carries his black and white checked woolen knee-skirt folded along with the fringed black and white blanket.

3. A young woman of Antigua, formerly the capital of Guatemala. Her wrap-around skirt is dark blue and white, her huipil is brilliantly colored, and her sash yellowish. On her head, what appears to be a white cotton toque is a pad upon which she carries her water jug.

4. Though colonized by the Spaniards more than four centuries ago, the Maya have staunchly held to their own culture. This little headpiece or crown becomes a talisman of the gods, the narrow strip being wrapped around thirteen times and sewn into shape with its Mayan motifs figuring in the thirteens. The colors are pink and sky blue both in the embroidery and the pompons. The huipil and wrap-around skirt are of unusual coloring in sky blue, white, and pink. The long gauze scarf is woven in the palest tints of the same colors.

Text and illustrations from Wilcoy, Turner, *Festival Costumes of the World* (New York: Scribner's, 1965). Permission pending.



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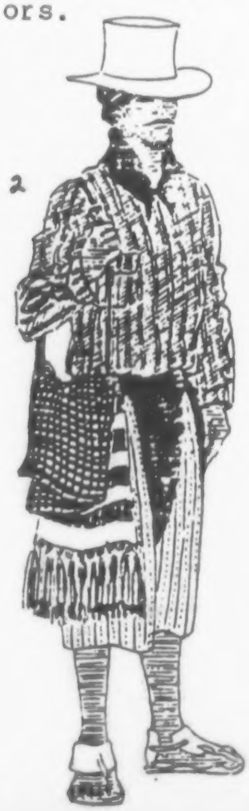

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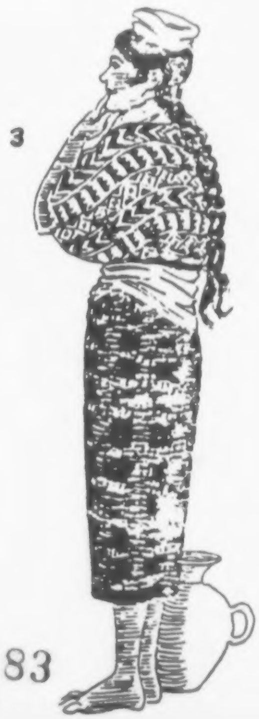

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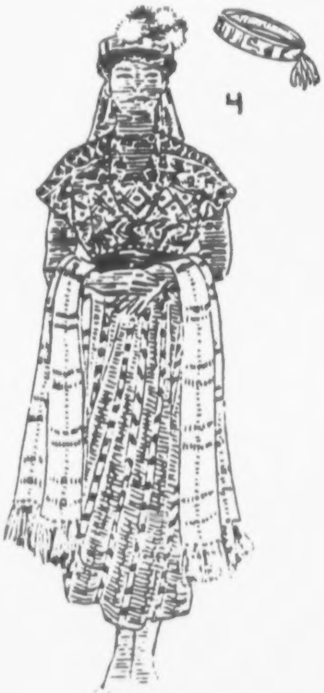
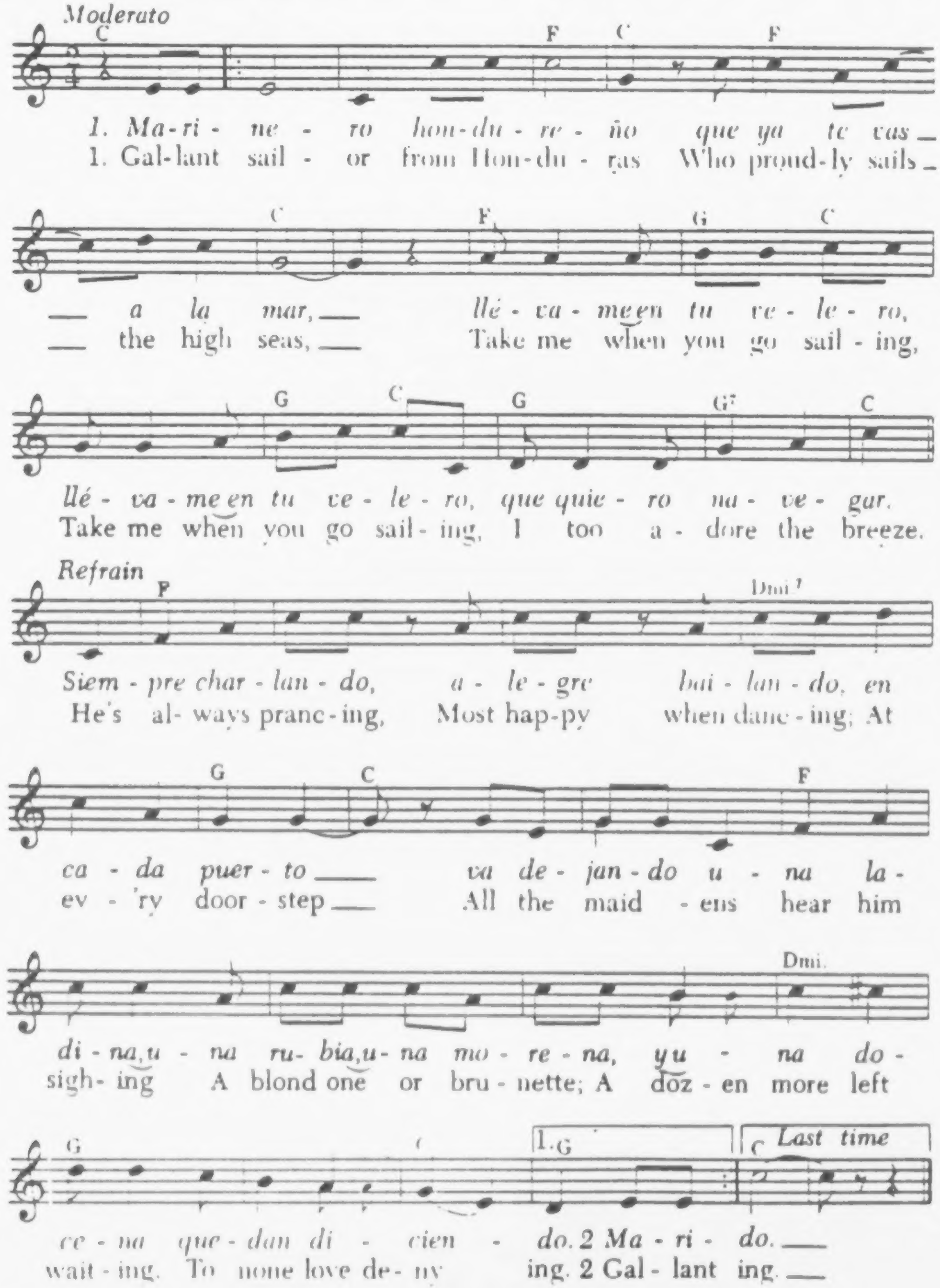


4

Activity 3: Music

Canción del Marinero Hondureño—
Song of the Honduran Sailor

Although the Honduran navy cannot boast a mighty fleet, the sailor, at least in the eyes of a lovelorn maiden, is unequaled on land and sea--as a lover, of course!


Moderato
C F C F
1. Ma-ri - ne - ro hon-du - re - ño que ya te vas
1. Gal-lant sail - or from Hon-du - ras Who proud-ly sails
C F G C
a la mar, llé - va - me en tu ve - le - ro,
the high seas, Take me when you go sail - ing,
G C G G7 C
llé - va - me en tu ve - le - ro, que quie - ro na - ve - gar.
Take me when you go sail - ing, I too a - dore the breeze.
Refrain
F Dmi.7
Siem - pre char - lan - do, a - le - gre bai - lan - do, en
He's al- ways pranc - ing, Most hap-py when danc - ing; At
G C F
ca - da puer - to va de - jan - do u - na la -
ev - 'ry door - step All the maid - ens hear him
Dmi.
di - na, u - na ru - bia, u - na mo - re - na, y u - na do -
sigh- ing A blond one or bru - nette; A doz - en more left
G C 1. G C Last time
ce - na que - dan di - cien - do. 2 Ma - ri - do.
wait - ing. To none love de - ny ing. 2 Gal - lant ing.

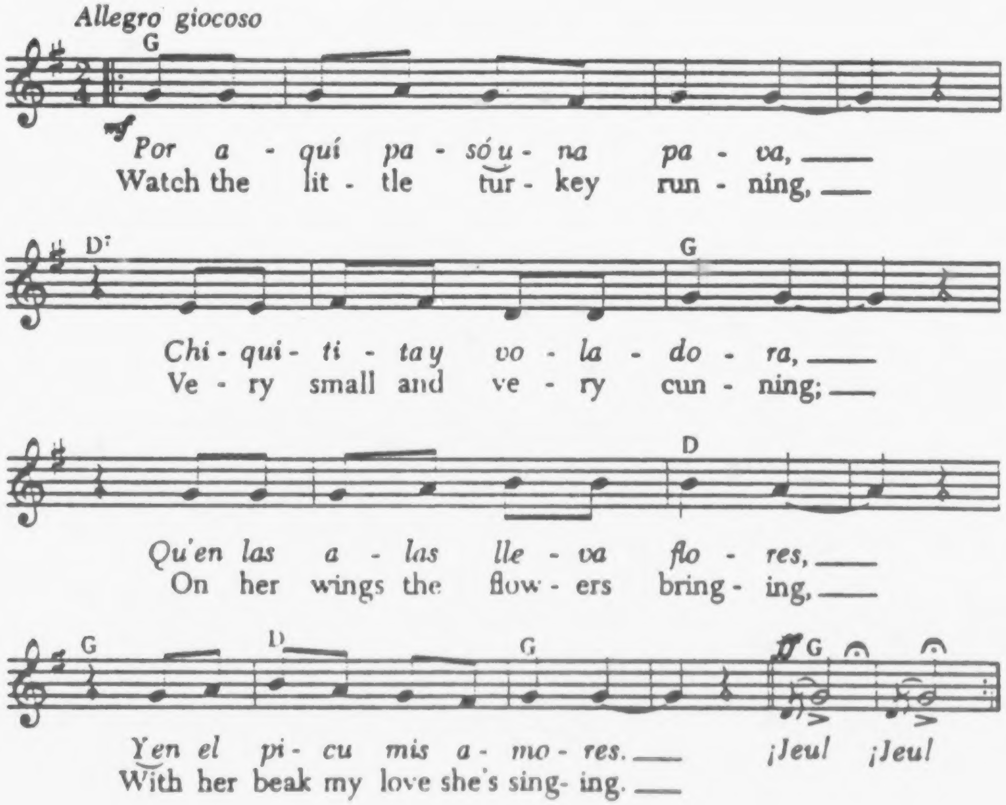
English version by Charles Haywood

"Cancion del Marinero Hondureno," from Haywood, Charles, *Folk Songs of the World* (New York: John Day Company, 1966). Permission pending.

Jeu! Jeu!

A jolly tune from El Salvador, popular with children and grown-ups.

English version by
Charles Haywood


Allegro giocoso
G
mf
Por a - quí pa - só u - na pa - va,
Watch the lit - tle tur - key run - ning,
D7
G
Chi - qui - ti - ta y vo - la - do - ra,
Ve - ry small and ve - ry cun - ning;
D
Qu'en las a - las lle - va flo - res,
On her wings the flow - ers bring - ing,
G
D
G
ff G
Y en el pi - cu mis a - mo - res.
With her beak my love she's sing - ing.
¡Jeu! ¡Jeu!

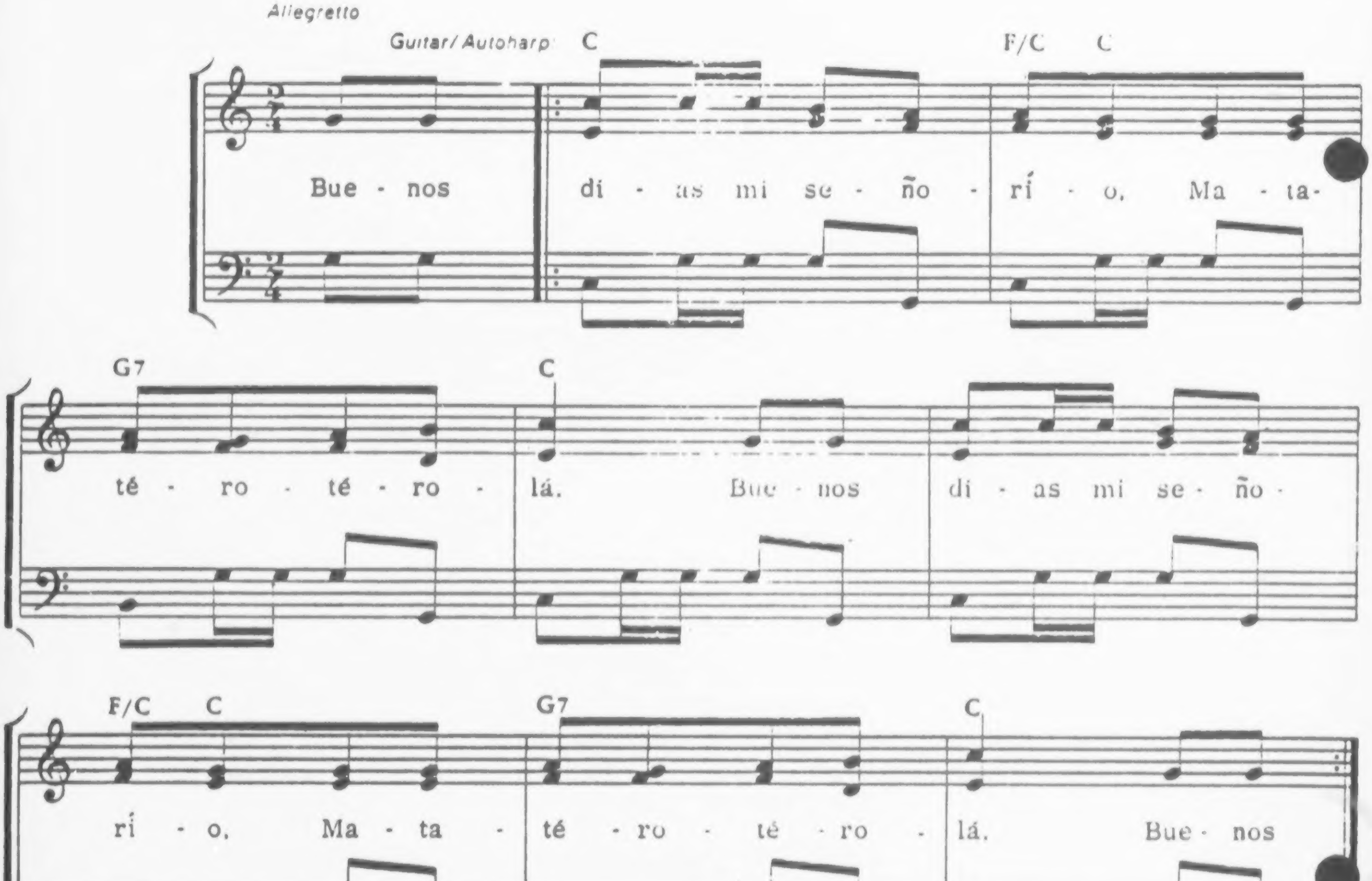
English version Copyright © 1966 by Charles Haywood.

"Jeu! Jeu!" from Haywood, Charles, *Folk Songs of the World* (New York: John Day Company, 1966), p. 27. Permission pending.

Activity 4: Game

MATATERO-TERO-LA
Guatemala: singing game

In one form or another this is a popular game among both boys and girls throughout Latin America. It is usually played outside because it takes a lot of space. Ten is a good number for this game, although as many as 25 can play if there is room. The players form two lines, one facing the other. Then, as in so many group games, a story is acted out to music. A boy (S=Suitor) chooses a girl as his partner from the opposite line, but must then ask her father or mother if she may come with him. The Suitor skips toward the Father (F=Father) and addresses him; then returns to his line to await the Father's response.


Allegretto
Guitar/Autoharp
C
F/C
C
Bue - nos di - as mi se - ño - rí - o. Ma - ta-
G7
C
té - ro - té - ro - lá. Bue - nos di - as mi se - ño -
F/C
C
G7
C
ri - o. Ma - ta - té - ro - té - ro - lá. Bue - nos

S.	Buenos dias, mi senorio, matatero-tero-la.	Good morning to you, sir, matatero.
F.	Que queria su senorio?	What do you want, sir, matatero?
S.	Yo queria una de sus hijas.	I want one of your daughters.
F.	Cual de todas queria usted?	Which one do you want?
S.	Yo queria a (Maria Elena).	I want (name).
F.	Y, que oficio le dondria?	And what work will you give her?
S.	La pondria a lavar platos.* Le pondremos barrendera.	I would have her wash dishes. We'll have her sweep.

(If the Father doesn't like the chore mentioned, he skips threateningly toward the Suitor.)

F.	Ese oficio no me agrada.	That is not work that I like.

(Then the suitor has to think of something different, e.g.)

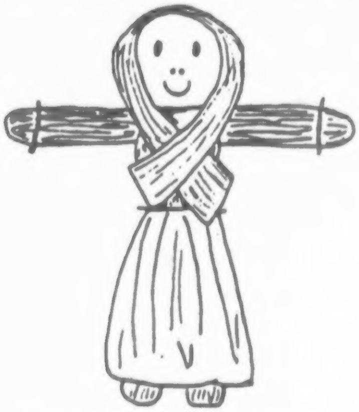
S.	Le pondremos reina de las flores, matatero.	We'll make her queen of the flowers.
F.	Ese oficio si me agrada.	This work does please me.

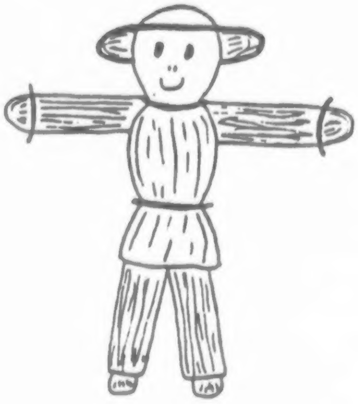
(The girl then skips back with the Suitor to his line. The game continues from the other group asking for a girl or a boy.)

*The Suitor suggests various chores like cleaning the house, washing the dishes, etc.

"Matatero-Tero-La" from Haywood, Charles, *Folk Songs of the World* (New York: John Day Company, 1966). Permission pending.

Activity 5: Handicrafts: Corn Husk Dolls





Corn husk dolls can be found throughout much of Mexico and Central America.

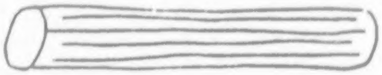
Supplies Needed:

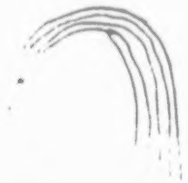
corn husks
crayons, magic markers, or paint
can filled with warm water

Instructions:

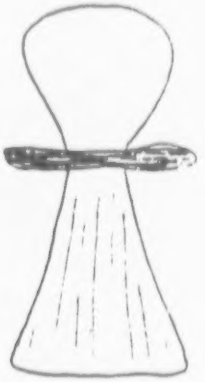
1. Soak five corn husks in warm water for about five minutes. Each corn husk should be about four to five inches long.

2. Take one corn husk and fold it in a cylinder shape and then fold it in half. This will be the head and body.

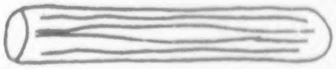


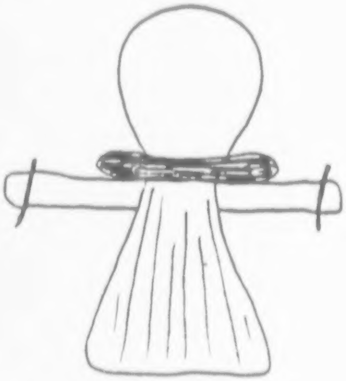


3. Tie a piece of husk around the top at the fold about 1/2 an inch down to form the head.

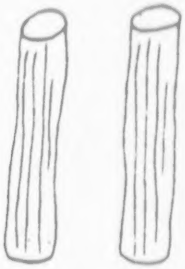


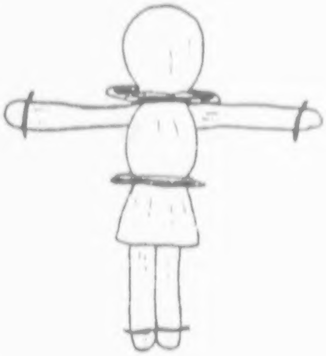
4. Roll one husk into a cylinder shape and push it through under the neck to form arms. Tie at ends of arms to form hands and prevent from tearing.



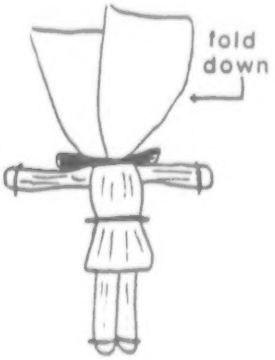


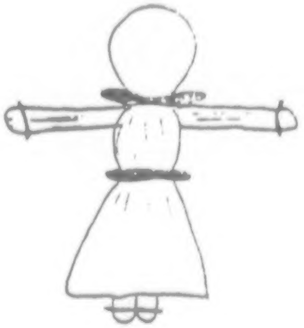
5. Roll two more husks in a cylinder shape. Push under fold up to the arms. These form legs. Tie at waist to prevent legs from falling out.



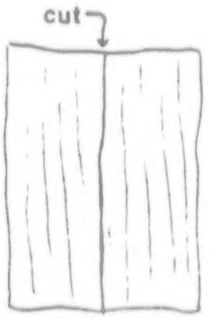


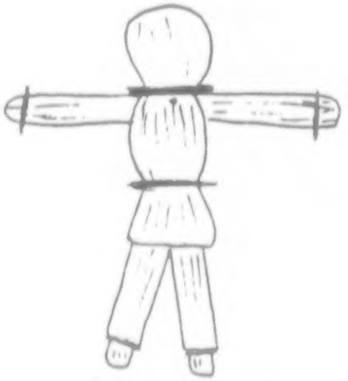
6. To form the dress take the largest husk and cut it in half. Place one end down at the neck in front of the face and behind, tie at neck and then fold over. Tie the husks at the waist.



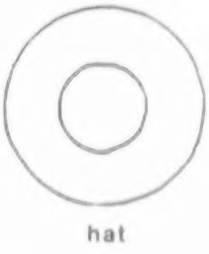


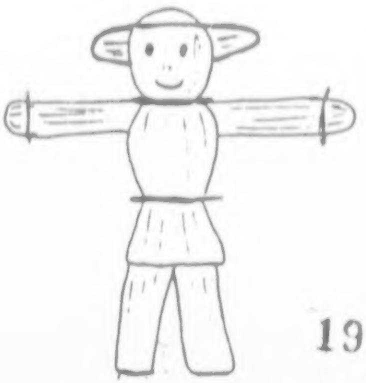
7. To form a shirt, use the same procedure as the dress except cut the husks shorter. Tie the shirt at the waist also. To form pants take one husk and cut in half lengthwise. Wrap one piece around each leg and then tie at the waist. Tie at the bottom of each leg to form feet and prevent tearing.

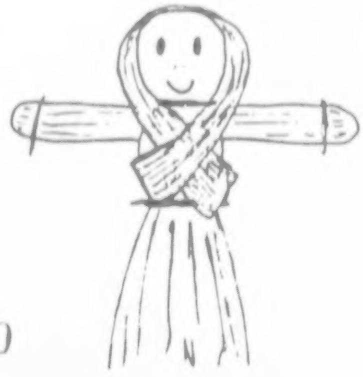




8. Allow the husks to dry about 30 minutes and then draw on the face.



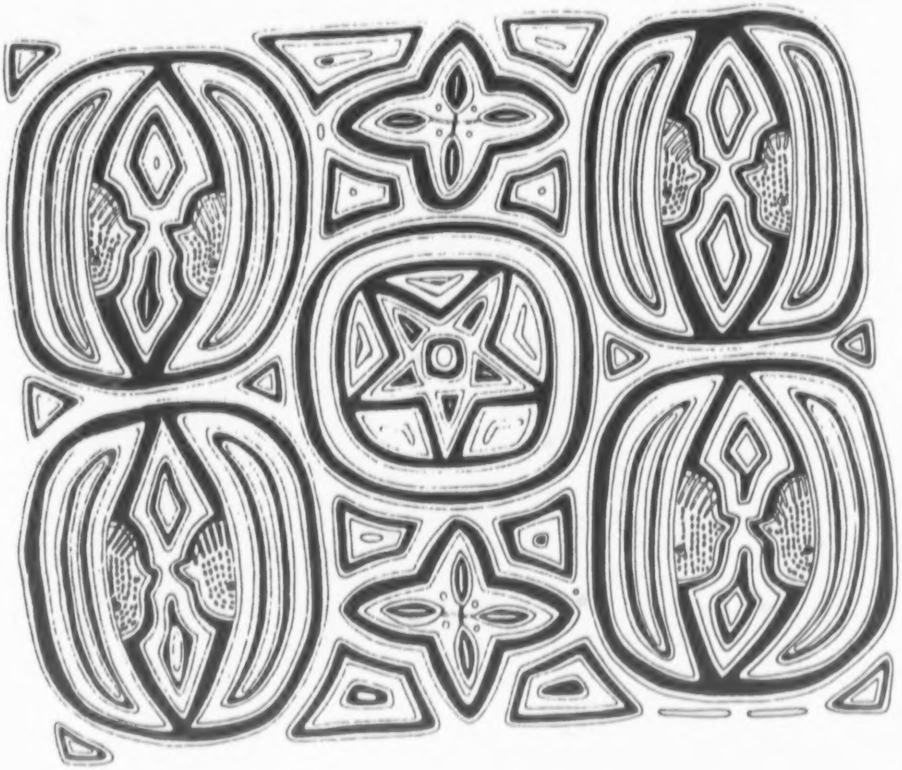




9. If desired, and you have a sixth husk, you can form a hat by cutting out a circle and then cutting out the center to fit over the top of the head. A portion of the head should stick out. You may form a shawl by simply draping half a husk around the doll and pinning at the neck.

Glab, Edward, Jr., editor, *Latin American Culture Studies: Information and Materials for Teaching about Latin America* (Austin, TX: The Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1980.) Permission pending.

Activity 6: Traditional Crafts--Molas



The Cuna Indians of the San Blas Islands off the coast of Panama have contributed a special art form to the rest of the world--the mola. A mola was originally a suit, or a dress, but today it is mostly seen in women's blouses or wall hangings. A mola is a beautiful and complicated reverse applique featuring an inlay technique that can vary in thickness from two to four layers of materials. Bright colors such as red, yellow, and orange are favorite colors for molas. The background is usually a darker color, such as dark blue, green, or black. The most common stitches are the hem, or blind, stitch, used for joining layers of materials, and the running and chain stitches, used to illustrate details such as eyes and mouths.

The Cuna women take several pieces of cotton material of different colors and baste them together along the outer edges. Then working from the top layer down they cut through the various layers to create designs. As the shapes are cut out, the edges of the openings created are turned under and sewn to the underneath material. The color that shows through the openings depends on the number of layers which are cut through a particular place.

Caraway, Caren, *The Mola Design Book* (Owings Mills, MD: Stemmer House, Inc., 1981). Permission pending.

It is ironic to note that in the 1920s local government leaders sought to abolish the mola. They felt it was more modern to have the women of the islands adopt plain dresses. While there was no organized resistance against this, many women chose to ignore the rule. The mola endured.

Simple molas can be made using colored construction paper, burlap, or felt and pasting down the different layers. Fish, worms, butterflies, etc., are good designs for simple molas. More complicated molas can be made using cloth and sewing rather than pasting the layers.

Materials

Several colors of construction paper or fabric;
needle and thread, or glue; scissors.

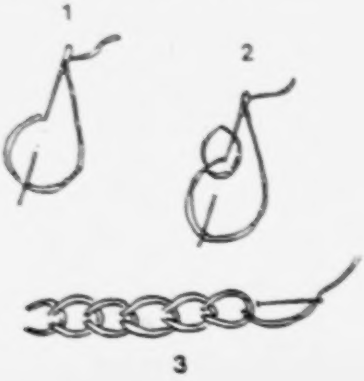
Instructions

1. Draw a design on paper.
2. Decide on the size of your mola. The traditional size measures 16" by 24". It is best not to make your mola any larger. Smaller molas are easier than larger ones.
3. Choose four colors to work with. Two should be the full length of the mola. You can insert pieces of the other two colors into the mola.
4. Draw the main design on the top layer of paper or fabric. Draw around it again, leaving 1/4" between the lines. When cut, this will reveal the second layer. Cut other designs in the top layer. Insert the third and fourth colors between the top and bottom layers.
5. If the mola is to be sewn, turn back the edges and sew them down using a hem, or blind, stitch. When illustrating details such as eyes or mouth use a chain or running stitch.

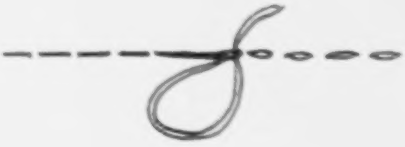
Stitches

1. The hem or blind stitch--a regular sewing stitch. Bring the needle up through the background cloth, catching only the edge of the cloth to be appliqued. Re-insert the needle close to the same point in order to keep the surface thread as invisible as possible. Continue in the same manner.

2. The chain stitch:



3. The running stitch:



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